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OF THOSE

WHOSE NAMES ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE

TRANSLATIONS

BY

MRS. FRANCIS ALEXANDER

BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1906

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INTRODUCTION

The festival of all saints. Written by Croiset.

THE church, always directed by the Holy Spirit, always zealous for the glory of the saints, always attentive to what may contribute to the salvation of the faithful, not content with having especially dedicated certain days for the veneration of some of the blessed inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem, presents on this day all those Christian heroes united together as objects of the same honour, and may God grant to us the abundant riches of his mercy and all the grace needful to imitate them. We consider the blessed who are in heaven as our brothers, we are all members of the same mystical body under the same Head, we have a right to the same inheritance; what we now are they have been, what they now are we may one day become.

Like us, they have wept in this place of exile; like us, they have been subject to the same infirmities, exposed to the same temptations and the same dangers; like us, they were arrested by the same difficulties, by the same obstacles; like them, we must, with the same means, conquer these difficulties, resist these enemies with the same courage, and with the same fidelity correspond to grace.

The glory with which they are crowned, and the felicity which they enjoy, deserve our wonder, and are the worthy objects of our ambition; while we reverence their merits so gloriously rewarded.

This is briefly what the church proposes, in this solemn and general honour which it bestows on this day on the blessed; this is the object and the motive of this solemnity.

Many of them are particularly reverenced in the course of the year, that the consideration of such objects, sustain-

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ing our faith, and elevating our hopes towards heaven, may remind us what they once were, what they are now, and what we must be to deserve to increase their number. But seeing that all the days of the year would not be sufficient to celebrate in honour of those of whom we have knowledge, and that there are an infinite number of others, whose names are not recorded except in the book of life, and that though unknown they are not the less worthy of our veneration, a day has been chosen in honour of them all, by us, who although still in this place of exile, are no less their brothers. This day so honoured and so solemn is the first day of November, on which are united all their festivals in one.

For a long time after this general solemnity had been established, it was celebrated in the interval between Easter and Pentecost; but among those whose triumphs were celebrated in that time of gladness, the names of the blessed Virgin, the apostles, and the martyrs were not included. The first day of May was designated to celebrate as the feast of the holy apostles, and another day of the same month to observe in honour of all the martyrs, first among whom is the blessed Virgin; but there was no particular feast in honour of all the saints, and it may be said that the famous temple of the pantheon was the occasion of the institution of to-day's solemnities.

The pantheon, which signifies in Greek a temple dedicated to all the gods, was the most magnificent edifice in Rome. It was esteemed a miracle of the arts and the crowning glory of architecture. It was ample, elevated, and of a round form, because it represented the world.

It was built by Agrippa, some years before the birth of Jesus Christ, in commemoration of the victory gained by Augustus in the war in Asia against Antony and Cleopatra; and it was named pantheon to show that all divinities were adored there, though Agrippa had consecrated it to Jove the avenger alone. The Christian emperors, neglecting nothing which might destroy the worship of idols, threw down all their temples, to bury under their ruins the progress of

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pagan superstition. The pantheon was perhaps the only monument of idolatry that was spared.

The famous temples of Capitoline Jove in Rome, of celestial Jove in Carthage, of Apollo at Delphos, of Diana at Ephesus, and of Serapis in Alexandria were all destroyed; and there was a law of Theodosius which decreed the destruction of all these places of abominations, and that the cross should be planted on their ruins. This manner of proceeding was needful in the early days of the church, to annihilate all the monuments of paganism and to awaken a horror of them: and St. Gregory the Great, towards the end of the sixth century, did the same with the temples of England, in the beginning of the conversion of the English; but afterwards, considering that idolatry was no more to be feared, he decided rather to purify those temples than to demolish them and build new ones. With this motive, Pope Boniface the Fourth consecrated the pantheon, which was preserved as an illustrious monument of the victory which the church had gained over the religion of the pagans. This pope dedicated it, under the name of the holy Virgin Mary and of all the martyrs, desiring that in future time all the saints should be honoured in the same temple which had been dedicated to all the gods of paganism.

This famous dedication took place on the thirteenth day of the month of May, in the year six hundred and nine, and Cardinal Baronio relates that he saw in this church a very ancient inscription, recording that Pope Boniface had caused twenty chariot loads of the bones of martyrs to be brought there from the catacombs. It cannot be said that the feast of the dedication of this magnificent temple, which was first called Our Lady of the Martyrs, and which is now named Our Lady of the Rotonda, was the feast of all saints. This was instituted under the pontificate of Gregory the Third, who, towards the year seven hundred and thirty-one, built a sumptuous chapel in the church of St. Peter of the Vatican, in honour of the Saviour, of the holy Virgin, the holy apostles, the holy martyrs, the holy confessors, and of all the just, who reign with Jesus Christ in the heavenly Jeru-

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salem. This solemnity was celebrated at first in Rome only, but soon passed into all the Christian world, and was placed in the rank of the most important festivals.

In the year eight hundred and thirty-five Pope Gregory the Fourth, being in France, ordered that the feast of all the saints should be celebrated in all the churches.

It is probable that the festival which was held on the first day of this month, in honour of false gods, and the dissoluteness which accompanied the feast, determined the church to establish the feast of all the saints, which was originally a day of universal fasting in all the churches, and is now celebrated with great solemnity.

However great may be the number of the saints whose memory the church honours on all the days of the year, much greater is the number of those whose names, whose virtues, and whose merits are unknown. How many great saints have lived in all ages, conditions, states, nations, and countries! How many are the heroic virtues whose splendour solitude has concealed! How many Christian heroes buried in the desert! How many great servants of God hidden in the obscurity of a poor, humble, mortified life, known only to God! How many great souls in low and abject labours! How many eminent virtues has the cloister kept secret! How many saints have been formed by a good use of adversity, and the exercise of penitence! The Lord has known them, has abundantly rewarded them, and will glorify them in the eyes of all men in the great day of His rewards and punishments; but is it not just that the church should honour on earth those whom God has already glorified in heaven? There is not one of the blessed who is not interested in our salvation; do they not deserve our veneration, which we pay them on this day?

The church is not content on this solemnity of all the saints to present to us these favourites of the Highest as the objects of our veneration, but proposes them to us as models for our imitation.

It is said on this day, that those whose wisdom we admire, whose virtues we venerate, whose glory we proclaim, whose

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merits we declare, whose felicity we desire, whose triumph we celebrate in celebrating their memory, are the elect of God, of the same age, sex, condition, state, employment, and birth as ourselves. We honour on this day, among the innumerable multitude of the blessed, some poor artisan, some cultivator of the ground, some servant, who in the obscurity of their condition, in the narrowness of their means, in the wearisome labours of their condition, have led innocent and Christian lives. We honour those princes and those kings who on the throne, and in the midst of a brilliant court, have preserved their purity of manners, and have made themselves saints by taking the maxims of the scriptures alone as the rule of their lives. We honour those prosperous persons, those rich in this world, who wiser than those who have permitted their eyes to be blinded by the false splendour of greatness, and their hearts to be softened by the luxuries which accompany the goods of this world, have employed their wealth in securing their salvation; have avoided the snares laid for them by the worldly, and making account of the riches of eternity only, have regulated their customs by the principles of the faith, and have become holy where others have found only perdition.

We honour in conclusion our brothers, who in the same society, with the same institutions, and under the same rules, have attained an eminent sanctity; our neighbours, our compatriots, who with the same passions, the same difficulties, the same obstacles, and with the same help, have acquired their salvation, and have happily arrived at their home. What excuse shall we have at some future day if we do not augment their number? What a cruel reproof through all eternity will the saints become to us should we be lost!

The saints are not precisely sanctified by means of great and stately works; these are not the proofs of their sanctity. Without these they may be saints, and with these they may not be saints. How many among the elect have done nothing on earth which has attracted admiration, and may they not be saints none the less?

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How many among the lost have done actions which men have applauded, but notwithstanding have been condemned by God? The saints have not become saints, except because they have fulfilled the duties of their own state, because they have known how to harmonize their condition with their religion, because they have preferred, in all things, conscience to human interests, the laws of God to their inclinations, the maxims of Jesus Christ to the maxims of the world.

A St. Louis, a St. Edward, a St. Elizabeth upon the throne, a St. Isidore in the practice of agriculture, a St. Uomobuono in the state of an artisan, a St. Blandina in the condition of a slave, — so many holy brethren with whom we have lived in the same community, so many saints in the same family, do they not convince us that holiness is not impracticable for us, that it has at least nothing so difficult that it does not bring some sweetness with it?

The church makes this known to us sensibly on this day by placing before our eyes so many million of saints who in this world have been what we would not willingly be. And showing us those monks, those virgins, those secular people, those poor, those rich among the saints, who are on this day the objects of the present solemnity and of our homage, it says to us, as in former days St. Augustine said to himself, "Are you not sufficient for those things for which these have been sufficient?"

In truth, we have no excuse which is not destroyed by the example of the saints.

They had the same employments that we have, the same temptations, the same passions, the same obstacles; they served no other master; we have the same laws, and we await no other glory. Many of those who have preceded us in our conditions and callings have become saints; many of those who will succeed us will be saints: what a misfortune, what an affliction in the hour of death, and through all eternity, if we do not profit by their example! To-day the panegyric of all the saints is pronounced from every pulpit; shall we not some day be of the number of those whose

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panegyric shall be pronounced? And if we shall not be of that number, what will be our fate?

"Take courage then, my brothers," said the venerable Bede, "let us follow with joy the road which leads to life. Heaven is our country, let us sigh to possess that blessed abode, supporting with patience the bitterness of our exile. Let us regard ourselves as only pilgrims on the earth. The saints are our compatriots, and we must be theirs. Let us never forget that we are no longer pilgrims and strangers, but fellow citizens of the saints and of the household of God; heirs of God, and co-heirs with Jesus Christ; for if we be partakers of His sufferings, we shall also be partakers of His glory. Our true country is heaven, how can it be that all our desires are not for that blessed city?" "There," says St. Cyprian, "a multitude of our dead friends await us. Let us contemplate the crowd of our brothers, who, secure of their own happy fate, invite us to persevere for the same crown; what joy, what reciprocal gladness for them and for us, when we are admitted to that happy society. Here reign the glorious company of apostles, the brilliant society of the prophets, the innumerable multitude of martyrs, so distinguished by the glorious signs of their victories. Here may be seen resplendent those virgins without number, who have triumphed over hell; those charitable souls who have succoured so many of the unfortunate, and all Christian heroes who have distinguished themselves. . . . We sigh, my brothers," continues the same father, "for a similar fate, all our desires, all our ambition, all our study should be, to have part in the same reward."

Great apostles! glorious martyrs! invincible confessors! holy virgins! illustrious anchorites! neither your counsels nor your examples are sufficient for us; may we have also the grace to have always before our eyes how much you have done in obedience to God, and how much God has now done for you; that your good example may teach us how we ought to live, and that the sight of your reward may animate us to live as we ought.

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BOOK I

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SELECTIONS FROM

THE LIVES OF THE HOLY FATHERS

TOGETHER WITH THE
SPIRITUAL FIELD

WITH A TABLE OF THE
CHAPTERS IN ALL THE WORK

IN VENICE
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The death of Saint Paul, the first hermit, and his burial. Written by Saint Jerome.

ST. ANTHONY having gone to visit Paul in the desert, they gave thanks together, and then began to speak of God, and passed all night in devout prayer; and when the morning dawned, Paul said to Anthony: "I have known for a long time, dear brother, that you were abiding in this country, and it was revealed to me that you would come to me, because the time of my departure is at hand, and my life draws to a close; I shall soon be freed from the bonds of the flesh and join my beloved Saviour, to receive the crown of life. You have been sent by God to lay me in the grave." And Anthony, hearing this, wept bitterly, praying him not to abandon him, but to let him die with him. But Paul answered him that he ought not to ask or seek his own advantage, but that of others; that indeed it would be happy for him to be freed from the temptations and infirmities of the flesh and pass to Christ, but that his life was needed for an example by the disciples and brothers.

"And," said he, "since it is according to the rule of charity that you should remain to be the servant of all, I pray you, if the fatigue is not too great, that you will return to your cell, and bring the robe that the Bishop Athanasius gave you, that I may be wrapped in it when I am dead." And Paul said this, not because he cared for the robe or for the honour of being wrapped in it, for in his lifetime he wore only a garment of woven palm leaves, but to spare Anthony the pain of seeing him die; who, thinking he could know of the robe only by divine revelation, bowed humbly, without contradicting him, with many tears; and having embraced him, returned to the monastery for the robe, being strengthened by the fervour of his love, which conquered the weakness of his old age. And arriving at the monastery, faint and weary, there came to him two of his disciples, ask-

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ing where he had been so long, and he answered them: "Woe to me who am called a monk, but am nothing; I have seen Paul in paradise;" and his disciples could not understand him, and not being able, for his tears, to explain himself more fully, he took the robe, and smiting his breast, he left the cell to return to Paul. And his disciples, praying him to tell them more plainly what he had seen, he answered: "There is a time to speak and a time to be silent;" and without stopping to eat, he left the cell in haste, fearing that before he could reach him Paul would pass from this life; which was indeed the case.

The second day of his journey, being about three hours' walk from the cell of Paul, he saw a choir of angels, apostles, and prophets rising to heaven, with Paul, clothed with wonderful splendour, in their midst. Then prostrating himself upon the ground, he threw dust upon his head, saying, "Oh Paul, how late have I known thee, and how soon hast thou left me!" And when he reached the cell of Paul, not seeing the body, he found it inside the cave, kneeling, with the eyes raised to heaven, as if in prayer; and as he did not move, he knew that while he was praying his soul had passed to God, and his body only remained.

And he wrapped the body in the robe he had brought, and with many tears he sang the psalms, and made prayers according to the Christian custom; and bringing the body from the cave, and not finding anything to dig the grave, and not knowing what to do, he said: "If I go to the monastery I shall be too late, for it is a four days' journey; and if I stay here I can do nothing;" and raising his eyes to God, he said: "Oh my Lord, show me what I ought to do, for I know not." And while he was saying this, hoping for divine guidance, suddenly there came from the desert two beautiful lions, running swiftly towards him, at which he was afraid; but immediately raising his heart to God, he took courage, and feared no more. And the lions coming near the body of Paul, stood still gently and then lay down near him, roaring in such a manner that they appeared to weep for him; and then rising up, they began to dig the earth with their paws,

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in the shape of a grave, and when it was finished, they bent their heads reverently before Anthony, gently licking his hands and feet, making it plain that they desired his blessing and permission to depart; which he understanding, thanked and praised God, rejoicing that dumb animals, after their fashion, know and obey Him; saying, "My Lord, without whose will and care not a leaf falls from a tree, neither does anything on earth live but by Thy grace, I pray Thee to grant them my blessing;" and signing with his hand that they might go, they departed with this permission. Then Anthony took the holy remains and reverently buried them; and as the heir of Paul, he took the tunic, which he had woven of palm leaves, with great devotion. And he returned to his disciples at the monastery and related what had befallen him; and in reverent memory of his spiritual father Paul, he wore the robe only on high festivals.

Let us now, having finished this legend, compare the life of Paul with yours, great and rich men, you who misuse your riches, making great palaces of marble and gold, and buying vast possessions; you drink from cups set with precious gems, Paul drank water from his hand; you wear cloth of gold, and Paul had not a dress so good as that of your poorest servant. But on the other hand, remember, that to Paul the doors of paradise were opened, which will be shut to you. He, loving goodliness, was clothed with the righteousness of Christ; you, clothed in silk, have lost this robe.

Paul, poorly laid in the earth, shall rise to glory; you, from tombs of fair and sculptured marbles, will rise to condemnation. Pardon me, I pray you, these words, and spend no longer your much loved riches for vain and useless things, and cease to array your departed friends in silken and golden robes; as though even death and tears could put no end to ambition and vanity.

Pray for me, all you who read this, pray for Jerome a sinner; who says in truth, that should God give him his choice, sooner would he choose the poor tunic of Paul, with his reward, than the portion of kings, crowned with gold.

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Anthony, desirous of martyrdom, went o Alexandria to visit the Christians in prison; and Marcianus, a cavalier, came to visit him, and entreat his prayers for his daughter, possessed by a demon. Written by Saint Jerome.

ANTHONY, hearing in those days of the great persecution of the Christians by Maximus the emperor, and how many were brought to martyrdom in Alexandria, with wonderful zeal, and desire of martyrdom, and great love of souls, fearing they might not come to bring him to martyrdom, left the monastery, saying to certain disciples, "Let us go to the glorious triumph of the martyrs of Christ, to console them, and if need be to die with them." And on his arrival in Alexandria, he visited them daily in prison, and comforted them, and strengthened their hearts not to yield to the tyrant when they were brought before him. And with much love he visited those who were condemned to work in the mines, and served them; and when any one died faithfully, he gave thanks, and accompanied him to the place of execution, exhorting him to support every torment for the sake of an eternal crown; which coming to the knowledge of the tyrant, he banished every monk from the city, and many fled: but Anthony, longing for martyrdom, gave no heed to the command of the tyrant, thus provoking his anger; and that he might be sure to see him, he would place himself in his path, dressed in his monk's robe; wishing thereby to teach those who would serve Christ, that those who do so perfectly, must be ready to despise both pain and death. And seeing that God did not permit him to be known by the tyrant, he sorrowed much, believing himself unworthy of martyrdom. But God, who takes care of his own, preserved Anthony for the example and instruction of his people and the monks; and the time of the persecution being past, he returned to his monastery.

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And once being alone within, Marcianus, a cavalier of the emperor, came, begging him to come and pray God for the restoration of his daughter, who was possessed. Anthony, looking from the window and seeing who was there, said: "Oh man, why do you ask my help, who am but a man like yourself? But if you believe in God whom I serve, go and pray to him yourself, and according to your faith, your child shall be cured." And that great man departed, calling on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, and found his daughter well. Many other miracles did God by him, so that he had much fatigue by reason of the number of the sick and possessed brought to him to be healed.

Saint Anthony teaches his disciples how the demons, who tempt us with diverse temptations, should be resisted. Written by Saint Jerome.

ST. ANTHONY said: "It is the command of God, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life;' for indeed we have to deal with many enemies, who are cunning, cruel, and expert. Great multitudes of them haunt the air around us. Their different classes I should not be able to define; I must leave that to those more wise and greater than I. This much I can say, that it is safer to know the many snares they spread for us. It becomes us first, to believe that God created nothing sinful, not even the malignity of demons; but being created good by the good Creator, and left to their own will, they became rebellious, and fell from heaven. And being envious, and seeking to prevent us from attaining to the throne and glory from which they fell, they have spread many errors of idolatry, and other sins, and laid snares for us, many and great.

"Some tempt us to one sin, and some to another; and are more or less cruel and malicious. And it is needful to seek diligently from God the gift of knowing their temptations;

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that we may be forewarned of their deceits, and be found ready armed, bearing the standard of the cross.

"They wage continual and cruel war against all Christians, especially monks, putting in their minds and bodies many temptations; but we need not despair, for being watchful against them, with prayers and fastings, they cannot prevail against us; but we must not be too secure or negligent, for when discomfited in one thing, they will change their ground, and seek to conquer us in another, and to destroy our souls.

"Their promises are not to be trusted, or their threats to be feared; for God will grant us divine grace, and they shall be overcome by us. Sometimes they incite us to watch and pray all night long, on purpose to weary us; and sometimes to overwhelm and drive us to despair with the recollections of our hidden sins; and if they cannot accomplish this, they tempt us to indiscreet zeal, to fastings and penances, so the body being ill, and the soul weary, we may turn back discouraged. When Christ drove them out of some possessed by them, they declared Him to be the son of God; He suffered them not to speak, though they spoke the truth; and so should we do, giving them no heed, lest in consequence of their once speaking truth, we should afterwards be led to believe their falsehoods.

"The enemy attacks us in many ways, such as dreams and others, which time would fail me to relate. They would never rest from tempting us and dragging us to perdition, if their power had not been restrained and weakened by Christ. If their strength were equal to their malignity, no human power could resist them; as we may prove by that Angel who, as we may read in the book of Kings, by his own power, without other help than that of God, killed in one night one hundred and eighty-five thousand men, of the host of Sennacherib, who besieged Jerusalem. They have, however, no power against us, unless permitted by God; as we are taught in Job that they cannot harm us either in person or possessions but by leave of Him.

"Not only were they prevented from afflicting Job, but they

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could not even enter into the swine without permission from Christ, as the Evangelist writes; how much more, then, can they not touch men made in God's image, and redeemed by His blood?

"Powerful, then, against demons are the strong arms of a true life and a constant faith. Believe me, as one who has proved it, that the devil fears watchfulness, prayers, and labours, and especially the fervent love we bear to Christ.

"And well knows that old serpent that God has placed him under the power of the righteous, to whom Christ says, by the scripture, 'Behold I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and to conquer every art of the enemy.'"

A miracle of Saint Anthony. Written by Saint Jerome.

IT so happened that two monks were coming to see St. Anthony, and their provision of water failing by the way, one of them perished with thirst and the other was near death, which St. Anthony knew by divine revelation; and he said to two friars who had come that day to visit him, "Take a bottle of water, without delay, and follow the road that leads to Egypt; and you will find one monk dead of thirst, and another who will die shortly if not relieved, and give this one some water." And when they had helped the dying monk, they buried the dead man, and brought the living one to Anthony. The cell of Anthony was so far from the place where this happened that he could know it only by spiritual revelation. But there were some of the brethren who wondered and said: "Why was not this revealed to Anthony before one of these men died, so that both might have been saved?" And he answered that such a question did not become any good Christian, because this was the hand of God, who gave to one the judgment he saw fit, while he granted life to the other; and that the dealings of God must be held in great reverence, for we must always fully believe them to be just and right, though the reasons of them may be concealed from us.

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How robbers went to seek Saint Hilarion to steal from him, and he converted them to the faith. Related by Saint Jerome.

WHEN Hilarion was living in his cell, being only eighteen years old, some thieves who dwelt in that desert determined to rob him, not liking that one so young should hold them in no fear, but should live alone among them. And they looked for his cell near the sea-shore all night; but it pleased God they should not find it until daybreak, and when they found him they concealed from him who they were and said: "What would you do if thieves should come?" And Hilarion replied: "He who has nothing does not fear thieves." But they said: "If you have nothing else to lose, you may lose your life." "That is very true," he answered; "but I have no fear of death, because I am prepared to die." And wondering greatly at his faith and courage, they confessed who they were, and that they had been all night wandering in the desert in search of him; and being touched to the heart, they repented, and promised to amend their lives.

Of Ammon and how he worked many miracles. By Saint Jerome.

AMONG the other disciples of St. Anthony was one named Ammon; and having great reputation of sanctity, many came to him to be cured, and among them a man, with his wife and many relations. And they brought their son, who was mad, having been bit by a dog; and they prayed Ammon to cure him, and he answered them: "Why do you trouble me when what you ask is beyond humanity to perform? But this much I can tell you: if you wish his restoration, you must restore to such a widow

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the ox you have stolen from her, and he will be cured at once." And they, hearing this, and feeling ashamed to have their hidden sins made known, and believing their son might be cured, restored the ox to the widow; and he was immediately restored to health.

At one time there were twenty-two people came to visit him, and as they made him many offers and protestations, Ammon wished to prove their sincerity; and he told them he was in great need of a bottle to bring water from the spring for strangers, because he lived so far from it, and they, promising to bring him one, went away. And as they went, one said to the other: "It would be a heavy load for my camel. You will do as you please, of course, but I do not intend to take it." "You know," said the other, "I have no camel, but only a donkey, and the load would be much worse for him; but notwithstanding that, as you say you will not take it, I shall, trusting in God and the merits of that holy man that my donkey may bear the load, though it is great."

And he placed it upon the donkey's back, and he took it to Ammon as lightly as if it weighed nothing; and when he arrived Ammon said to him: "You have done well to trust in God and bring this load upon your donkey, for know that your companion's camel is dead." And he returned to his house and found that what Ammon had said was true. Many other wonders did God by him, and in short he was so virtuous in all things that St. Anthony held him in great love and reverence.

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How Panfutius, in the simplicity of his heart, desired to know to whom he was equal in goodness; and how an angel revealed to him that he was equal to a musician, to a Signore of that country, and to a merchant; all of whom were taught by him to love God more perfectly. Written by Saint Jerome.

WE next visited the monastery of the Abbot Panfutius, a man of God, who was a renowned hermit and dwelt in the desert near the noble city of Eraclea in the Thebaid.

It was related to us by those worthy of entire faith that he led by grace a pure and angelic life; and he once prayed God that he might, by divine permission, be shown that person to whom, by God's grace, he was equal in goodness. And an angel appeared to him and told him he was equal to one who gained a living by singing and playing on certain instruments. Panfutius, wondering at this reply, went in haste to the country where the musician lived; and finding him, he began cautiously to make his acquaintance and to question him respecting his occupation and himself; and he answered that he had been a most sinful man, and that it was but a short time since he had ceased to be a highway robber, and had practised this miserable means of earning his bread.

Panfutius, not content with this answer, begged him to tell him more, and especially if when he was a robber he had done any good works.

He replied: "I cannot remember that at that time I ever did, except once when a virgin consecrated to God had been carried off by my companions, I rescued her from them, and at great risk to myself, secretly and by night, conducted her safely home.

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"On another occasion I met a beautiful lady wandering in the desert, and having compassion on her, I said to her: 'Where, and why, and how have you come here?' And she told me with bitterness of spirit that she was a most unhappy woman, and that if I would accept her as a servant she was content; for her husband had been put to torture and thrown into prison for debt which he was unable to pay; that her three sons were also taken for the same debt, and that she had saved herself only by flight, and had fled to that place for concealment, and she had eaten nothing for three days. When I heard this I was touched with pity, and I led her to my cave and gave her food, and I enquired the amount of the debt which had brought such misery upon them; and finding that it was three hundred soldi, I gave her all that sum of money and brought her safely back to the city, and she liberated her husband and her sons by means of that money."

Then Panfutius said: "I have never done so much as this, though as I believe you have heard, I am much reverenced among the monks, and have laboured diligently to attain perfection. But know that God has revealed to me that your merit is equal to mine in His sight; therefore I pray you to recognize God's grace in your heart, and be not negligent, or think you have attained sufficient excellence because I tell you this, but study to advance and do honour to the grace of God." When he heard this, he threw away his musical instruments and began to lead a life of fasting and prayer day and night, comforting himself with psalms and spiritual songs; and at the end of three years he yielded his soul to God, and choirs of angels bore it to heaven.

After his spirit had passed to God, Panfutius continued with increased desire to study to attain perfection, and after some time, moved by the same spirit as before, he prayed the Lord to reveal to him if there was on earth one equal to himself, that he might know to what state of divine grace he had already attained, and how far he fell short of perfection; and he was answered by a voice from heaven, which said: "Know that you are equal to a certain lord of the

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neighbouring city." And when he heard this answer, he immediately arose, and went to his house, and knocked at the door, and when it was opened that gentleman received him with much reverence, and washed his feet, and prepared an abundant feast for him; and after Panfutius had eaten, he began to ask him of his life; and he took but little credit to himself, saying that he was not a man of any exalted virtue. Panfutius then desired him to describe to him his way of life more exactly, saying that the Lord had revealed to him that he was equal in merit to the monks of the desert. Then he said humbly that he could see nothing good in himself, except that he had been careful to entertain pilgrims courteously, that he had always been the first in that country to open his door to them, and that no stranger had ever left his house until he had provided him with everything needful for his journey. That he had never despised the poor, and had always given to them what was due to his condition and their necessities. That when he sat in judgment he had never received a bribe, and had always pronounced a just sentence, never departing from the right, either for love or hatred. That on every occasion of difference he had been a peacemaker; that no one could complain of any injury received from his family or from his cattle; that all men were welcome to sow in his fields, and that he was careful to reap only what was his own; that he avoided carefully giving any occasion of offence, and that this had been his mode of life up to the present time.

Panfutius, having heard these things, embraced him, and blessed him, and said: "The God of Sion bless thee and grant thee eternal life, and since thou hast well done these things, thou must now forsake all that thou hast and follow Christ, seeking the hidden treasures of wisdom."

When he heard this, he left his wife and his children well provided for, and leaving all things, followed Panfutius to the desert. And when they had arrived there, Panfutius placed him in a cell near his monastery, and instructed him what mode of life he should lead, in prayers and labours and spiritual exercises; and he himself returned to the monas-

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tery. And he counted himself until then to have done little, since men of the world had so much merit; so his fervour was kindled afresh, and he studied to increase in goodness. After a certain time that disciple of Panfutius attained great perfection, and Panfutius being one day in his cell, he saw his soul borne to heaven by angels, who sang that verse "Blessed, oh Lord! is he whom thou hast chosen and called, for he shall dwell in thy house;" and knowing certainly that he had passed from this life and ascended to heaven, he was animated anew to more fervent labours, counting it shame to himself to be less than these his two disciples, who in so short a time, having been made perfect, had received the crown of celestial glory.

And thinking thus, he prayed God once more to manifest to him again to whom he was equal in merit, and he was answered: "Thou art equal to a merchant who comes to visit thee, as you will see; arise, and go to meet him."

And Panfutius arose without delay and went to meet that merchant, who was on his return from the Thebaid with three shiploads of merchandise; and as he was a devout man, he came to Panfutius with his servants, and brought him ten staia of provisions; and when Panfutius met him, he saluted him, and with much benevolence said to him: "Oh perfect and holy man, why dost thou labour for earthly things? Thou being called to heavenly things, leave merchandise to men who love this world, and become a merchant of the kingdom of heaven, to which thou art called, and follow Him to whom thou art soon to pass."

The merchant hearing this, ordered his servants to return to his house, and to give all his goods to the poor; and he, with great faith, followed Panfutius, who assigned to him the same cell from which the two others had been summoned to heaven. And having been instructed in the way of the Lord, like the other two, in a short time he was called to the congregation of the just, in eternal life.

After this the angel of God appeared to Panfutius and said to him: "Come, blessed of the Lord, to the eternal mansion prepared for thee. Behold, with me are the prophets,

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who will receive thee into their company." And after these things Panfutius came out from his cell, and certain priests coming to him, he revealed these things to them, saying that the judgments of God are so hidden that many appear guilty who are good, and therefore no one should be despised, as in every condition of human life are some who please God and possess those virtues in which He delights, and He looks only at sincerity of heart and goodness of life, and not at the dress. And having said these and other gracious words, he rendered his spirit to God, and it was visibly seen that angels carried him to heaven with great songs and praises.

How Macarius of Alexandria saw many demons in church in the shape of children who tempted people in diverse manners. Related by Saint Jerome.

THE place where Macarius lived was called Scythia, and was a large monastery about two days' journey from that of Nitria, and there was no road to it, and it could be found only by the signs of the stars. There was but little water, and that of bad odour, though not a bad taste. In it resided few monks, but those of great sanctity, because it was such a terrible place that not many could endure it. They lived in much charity together, and also with those monks who came to visit them. I will relate one instance of the charity in which they lived. Macarius, having once received a fine bunch of grapes as a present, took it immediately to one whom he thought more infirm than himself; and this one, thanking God for the charity of Macarius, and thinking another monk needed it more than he, gave it to him; and thus it passed through all the monastery, and was at last returned to Macarius, who seeing so much charity and abstinence among them, was incited to greater diligence. It is related by faithful people who heard it from his own lips that the devil, in the form of a monk, knocked at the

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door of his cell, and said: "Get up, Macarius, let us go to church where all the monks are." And Macarius, knowing him, answered: "Oh lying enemy of all truth, what have you to do with the congregation of the brethren?" Then Satan, seeing himself discovered, said: "Do you not know that wherever there is a church there we are?" "Then may God prevent you from doing harm there," said Macarius, and kneeling down he prayed God to show him if this boast of the enemy was true; and he rose up and went to the church where the monks were assembled, and again he prayed the great God of truth to show him the truth in this matter. And while he prayed he saw in the church what appeared many little Ethiopians, who went among all the monks, now here and now there, and when, according to custom, one monk stood up singing or saying the psalms, and the rest, seated around him, made the responses, Macarius saw that these demons in the form of Ethiopians were busy talking to those who remained seated. They placed their fingers on the eyes of some and they went to sleep; they touched the mouths of others and made them gape; to one they appeared in the form of a woman; to another they represented some fancy, and Macarius saw that thus they distracted and occupied the minds of the monks. He saw too that the most perfect drove them away, and seeing this, they fled from them; but if they did not drive them away, the demons jumped upon them and seated themselves on their heads.

Macarius, seeing these things, began to weep and pray, saying: "Look upon us, O Lord, and drive away this enemy, who is full of so much deceit." And when the service was finished, he sent for the monks, and taking them aside, one by one, he told them of this vision, asking them what their thoughts had been in the church, and according to their confessions they had been such as were suggested by the temptations of the demons. And the monks found that all wandering of heart and distraction of mind in time of prayer are the work of the enemy and are the fault of negligence, because the demons fled away in dismay from

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those who watched their thoughts and resisted valiantly, and could do no harm to those whose minds were intent upon prayer and raised to God.

It is related that seeing the monks receive the sacrament, he saw that some, instead of the body of Christ, received charcoal, not from the priest, but from demons, and the holy sacrament returned to the altar; while from those who received it worthily, the demons departed; and he saw an angel of God, who placed his hand upon that of the priest to give it to them; and from that time he retained the grace to see the illusions of the enemy in the hearts of the monks in the time of prayer, and of distinguishing those who received the sacrament worthily.

Of how Macarius went into the Thebaid, and how he taught the monks greater humility, and how he healed a priest of an illness brought upon him by God for his sin. Written by Saint Jerome.

MACARIUS, having heard much of the perfect life of the monks in the Thebaid, went to the monastery, and one day, speaking with the monks, he told them this lesson in humility. He said that all the fasts and religious exercises which he had desired to observe he had been able by the grace of God to accomplish, but that once he desired to remain for five days occupied in thinking only of God; so he shut himself up in his cell, and said to himself: "Now, my soul, do not descend from heaven to earth, you have much to meditate upon; first of your Creator, and then of each order of the saints and angels; and in heaven let your contemplation rest, and not descend to earthly things;" and he persevered two days and two nights, and he knew the devil was very angry with him. And he took the appearance of a fire, and it appeared to Macarius that his cell was burning, and that the mat on which he was seated was kindling, and for this fear he abandoned his spiritual meditations.

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So he saw he could not continue the five days, and afterwards he was careful not to neglect to think of earthly things, seeing the constant contemplation of God would tempt to spiritual pride.

I once went to find Macarius, and I found at the door of his cell a priest who was very ill and had come to be cured by him, but he would neither speak to him nor open the door. When I went in, having pity for his great distress, I begged Macarius that he would at least answer him; and he said to me: "He is not worthy to be cured, for he is afflicted by divine justice; but if you desire he should be cured, you must make him promise never to say mass again." And when I asked him why he required this, he said: "He has been in the habit of saying mass, being polluted with deadly sin, and God has thus punished him; but notwithstanding this, if he will abstain from celebrating it henceforward, with the help of God he shall be cured."

I told this to the priest, and he thankfully took an oath never to say mass again, and I led him to Macarius, who said to him: "Do you believe, oh priest, that God sees every hidden thing?" And he replied: "I do." And Macarius said: "Have you been able to escape his judgments?" And he replied: "No, my Lord." "Then," said Macarius, "if you acknowledge your sin and do penitence, you may receive mercy;" and the priest promised to do as he had said. Macarius then laid his hand upon his head and prayed for him, and he was perfectly cured.

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Of two brothers who followed the active and contemplative life, and which was the best. Written by Saint Eradius.

TWO young men, sons of a rich merchant, at the death of their father divided between them his property, which was very great in gold, silver, and men and women servants. And having done this, they consulted together and said: "What life shall we lead? If we follow the business of our father, we shall leave the fruit of our labours to others, as he has done to us; and perhaps in travelling through many countries all may be lost by perils of land or sea or robbers, and we may lose both soul and body. Let us follow then the monastical life of Apollonius, and let us go to the desert and do penance and give our property and our souls to the service of God." And by mutual consent they retired from the world, and one gave all his share to various monasteries and holy men, and learned a trade by which he lived poorly, being constantly in prayer by himself. The other built a monastery and took as companions some holy men, strangers, poor, old, and infirm, and maintained them with his wealth. After their death there was a question among the monks which of them had led the best life, some saying one, and some the other; and as they could not decide the question, they went to the Abbot Pambo and begged that he would do so for them who answered that each had done well — he who followed Abraham in his hospitality, and he who had sought solitude like Elijah. But not having decided which was the best, some said that he had been the most perfect who, following the words of Christ, had given all his goods to the poor and devoted himself to prayer.

Some said, on the other side, that the best was he who had been so hospitable, for he had shown kindness, not only to the poor, but to the sick and to pilgrims; that he had saved many souls and bodies, and had been the cause of

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much good, and through his great charity he had thought more of the good of his neighbour than of his own. The Abbot Pambo replied that he who chose the solitary life could hardly be considered equal to him who for the sake of charity gave both his goods and himself to the service of others; but, he added, "though this one endured great bodily fatigue, he had the consolation of human society, of which the other was deprived, who being in solitude was far from all men's sympathy; so I cannot decide which was the best, but wait a few days and I will pray God to show me this clearly." And after some days the monks came to him again, and he said thus: "God is my witness that I speak the truth; while I was praying that it might be revealed to me which was the best, I saw heaven opened, and both of them were in paradise in equal glory."

How Saint Serapion sold himself as a slave to convert pagans. Written by Saint Eradius.

THERE was a monk named Serapion, and though he had many virtues, in one he excelled all others; he desired no worldly goods, he practised great abstinence, and was most learned in holy scriptures. Through desire of the salvation of the heathen, whom he saw to be without the knowledge of God, being once in a city he caused himself to be sold by one of his companions to a company of play actors who were pagans, that he might convert them, which he did; and the price they had paid for him, he laid aside; and he remained their slave until by divine grace they were all brought to the faith and the knowledge of Christ. It was his custom to eat only bread and drink only water, and whenever he could find opportunity he studied and learned by heart the holy scriptures. At first, before his goodness was known to his masters, they employed him as a slave in the meanest work, but when they knew his excellence and were converted, they called him and said to him thus: "Seeing in you the grace of God, we wish to deliver you

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from serving as a slave, and we desire that you should be free, as through you we have been set free from the service of sin and Satan; and we freely give you your liberty." And the blessed Serapion answered: "Since God has brought you to a state of salvation and the knowledge of Himself, I think I am no longer needful to you, and therefore if it please you, I wish at parting to reveal to you what I have concealed until now, which is, that being in Egypt, a free man and a monk, I had compassion on your errors, and had myself sold to you for a slave, in the hope of delivering you from them, which, by the grace of God, I have done. Here is the price you paid for me, and now let me go to save other heathen in the same way."

And they begged him that he would be pleased to remain with them, not as a slave, but as a father and a master; but he would not. Then they prayed him to keep the money they had paid for him and take it with him, if not for himself, for the poor, but he said: "Give for yourselves that which is yours; I do not wish to give what is not mine."

And after these words they prayed him that if he would not stay with them, he would at least condescend to make them a visit at the end of a year. And Serapion left them and went to Lacedemonia, and coming to the house of a great man, he found that he and all his family were heretical Manichaeans, and he sold himself to that lord and became his servant. And in the course of two years he and all his family were brought to the true faith.

And that lord, knowing his goodness, set him free, and Serapion returned to him the price he had given for him, and took passage in a ship, and went to Rome.

Of the judgments of God.

EVAGRIUS relates, that being once with the most holy deacons, Euagrius and Albinus, he asked them the reason why those who appear to be holy men fall into sin and ruin, and why God sends great judgments on those who appear to be his friends. He was moved to ask

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these questions because in those days the Abbot Cirmone had fallen down dead while preaching; and a stone had fallen on a monk who was digging in the garden and had killed him; and another had died of thirst; and many such things had happened. And they referred the matter to Jacob and Panfutius, enquiring why men of good lives should wander from the faith or die violent deaths; and they instructed them that everything that happens in this life comes by the command or permission of God, and all good comes by the will of God, but that all falling into sin is permitted for some good; because it is impossible, unless men are cured of their spiritual pride, they should be saved, and that God permits them to fall that they may return to Him, and also that their fall may make others cautious and fearful.

And it often happens that those who appear good to us are not so, because their works do not spring from good motives. As, if a man should give charity to a poor girl to make her like him, or should do good works from hypocrisy, it would be impossible he should persevere; for God's grace being withdrawn from him, the devil tempts him and he falls.

So we may rest assured that no one can possibly fall into deadly sin except he who is abandoned by divine Providence for his sins, for pride and corrupt intentions, or by his own negligence.

The bag of silver. Written by Saint Eradius.

IN the mountain of Nitria had lived also the Abbot Ore, whom I did not see because he was already dead; but I heard him much commended as being of wonderful virtue, and especially by the handmaid of Christ, St. Miliana, who saw and knew him. And in particular it was said of him that he had never lied, sworn, blasphemed, nor spoken without great cause. In this mountain also dwelt the Abbot Pambo, and his excellence showed itself in the

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good and perfect disciples whom he had. Among these were Dioscorus the bishop, and Ammonius, Eusebius, and Utimus, brothers, Origen, Dracontius, and Nipote, all of singular sanctity and fame. Although Pambo was adorned with every virtue, he had particularly this — that he was a great despiser of gold and silver, and a great lover of poverty. Of him the most devout Miliana told me this: "When I had departed from Rome and come into Egypt, to see the holy fathers of the desert, arriving first in Alexandria and talking with the Abbot Isidore and hearing from him of the great virtues of this Pambo, I prayed him that he would accompany me to the desert to see him, which he did.

"And when I had arrived where he was, having bowed myself to him, I gave him in a bag three hundred pounds of silver, and prayed him that he would give me something of his own. And he, not rising for that from his seat, nor leaving the weaving of certain twigs, nor even looking at me, gave me no answer, excepting that he said: 'God give thee a recompense.' Then he said to a disciple of his: 'Take this silver and dispense it through all the monasteries of Lydia and in the islands, because it seems to me that these places have greater need than the others.' And he commanded that he should not give it in Egypt, because in that place there was great abundance. And I, expecting that he would praise and thank me, seeing that he said nothing, thought that he had not noticed that the quantity was so large, and I said: 'Know, father, that these are three hundred pounds of silver.' And he, not condescending yet to look at me, answered me: 'He to whom thou hast given this charity needs not to be told the quantity, for He who knows the weight of the mountains knows well how much this silver weighs. If thou hadst given it to me, thou shouldest reasonably tell me the weight; but having given it to Him who, as the Evangelist says, did not despise two mites offered by the widow, thou hast no need to say more. Therefore keep silence, and be still.'

"And afterwards he told me that God had revealed to

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him that he should soon pass from this life. And a little afterwards, without fever or other pain, weaving a little basket, and being at the age of seventy years, feeling death come, he recommended his spirit to God, and passed in peace; but first he called me and said to me: 'Take this little basket, for I have nothing else to give thee, and pray God for me.'

"After his death I left the desert, and I preserved that basket as a great jewel. This Pambo, in the hour of his death, when Paulus Hortonius and Ammonius, famous men of great science, were standing near him, said to them: 'Since I came into this desert I have eaten no bread except that earned by my labour, nor have I said a word of which I need to repent, but for all this now I go, and it seems to me that I have but just begun to serve God.'"

Of the Abbot Pemen. Written by Saint Eradius.

IN the same country with the Abbot Pemen lived an old friar who, before Pemen came there, was very famous and much esteemed by the people; but when Pemen, leaving Scythia, came there, many abandoned him for Pemen, which made him envious, so that he spoke against him. This grieved Pemen, who said to his disciples: "What can we do to make friends with this brother? See how much trouble those have caused him who have left him to come to us. Let us prepare some food and wine, and go to pay our respects to him, and perhaps he will feel more kindly to us." And they went and knocked at the door, and his disciples asked who was there, and Pemen answered: "Go and say to the abbot that Pemen has come to ask his blessing." And the disciples did so, and the abbot replied that he did not desire his company; which the disciples telling Pemen, he sent him word they could not go until by giving them his blessing he had made them worthy of being his friends; and the abbot, seeing so much patience and humility, repented and opened the door and welcomed them

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in peace, and they dined together, and he said: "That which I have seen in you is no less holy than those things which I have heard of you;" and from that time they were dear friends.

A friar once asked Pemen: "What shall I do, my father? I am often melancholy and depressed by trifles." And he answered: "You must never condemn others or speak unkindly of them, and you will find peace."

Satan once appeared to Pemen and tempted him to despair, saying he was too sinful to be saved, and threatening him with perdition; but he replied with great confidence: "Even if I should find myself in hell, you would be lower down than I."

The tears of the Abbot Silvanus. Written by Saint Eradius.

THE Abbot Silvanus, being once in the desert called Spelco, was rapt in an ecstasy, and afterwards coming to himself, he wept much, and his disciples asking him the reason, he said: "My children, I beheld the last judgment in a vision, and many secular and ignorant people go into the kingdom of heaven, and many priests and monks into torments," and saying this, he wept bitterly.

Of two friars, one sober and the other intemperate, and how the sober one converted the other. Written by Saint Eradius.

THERE was an old friar who drank so much that he was often intoxicated, and he made a mat every day, and what he so earned he spent every evening for wine; and after a while another friar came to live with him who was also very industrious, and he made a mat every day. And the first friar took both mats and sold them and spent all the money for wine, giving his companion nothing but a little piece of bread every evening, and this he did for

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three years, the second friar being so patient that he never complained. But at the end of three years this sober friar said to himself: "Here I am badly clothed and scantily fed; I will go away and live with some other companion." But on second thoughts he said: "Why should I wish to go away? I have borne this life until now for the love of God; it is better to have patience and persevere;" and he determined to stay. And not long afterwards the angel of God appeared to him and said: "Remain here and take comfort; to-morrow we shall come for you." And giving faith to his words, the next day he said to his intemperate companion: "My brother, do not go away, but stay in the cell to-day, because the angels are coming for me." And at the time when the friar was accustomed to go and buy wine he said: "I do not believe the angels are coming for you to-day, as you said." But he answered: "They will surely come;" and while he was speaking his soul, without pain, passed from the body, and the angels bore it to heaven, and the old and intemperate friar, seeing these things, began to weep bitterly and to say: "Alas! my brother, many years have I lost through my sin;" and from that day he became a sober and good man.

The Abbot Macarius and Satan. Written by Saint Eradius.

AS the Abbot Macarius was coming from the seashore to his cell with a bundle of palm leaves to make baskets, behold Satan came to meet him, with a reaping-hook in his hand, with which he tried in vain to strike him; and finding he could not, he said: "It grieves me much that I cannot conquer you, and yet I do more than you. If you fast, I never eat; if you watch, I never sleep; but only by one thing you have conquered me;" and Macarius enquiring what that was, he replied: "Your humility alone has overcome me; by reason of that I have no power against you."

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Evil thoughts. Written by Saint Eradius.

A FRIAR came to the Abbot Pastor and told him that so many evil thoughts came into his heart that he was terrified and thought himself in danger, and Pastor, hearing this, told him to extend his arms and catch the wind, and he answered that that he could not do; and the abbot said that neither could he hold away evil thoughts that they should not come to him, but that it was his part to resist them and drive them away. And on this subject the Abbot Joseph said, that as serpents and scorpions shut up in a vase would die after a time, so the thoughts the demons suggest to the heart, by the patience with which they are endured, and the firmness which never puts them in practice, are at last subdued.

On mistrusting the providence of God. Written by Saint Eradius.

A DISCIPLE of the Abbot Bessarion, being with him one day on the seashore, said to him: "O my father, I die with thirst." And he told him to drink some of the sea water, which he did, and finding it sweet, he filled his bottle with it. And the Abbot Bessarion, seeing that, asked him why he had filled his bottle; and he said: "Pardon me, my father, but I was afraid I should be thirsty again." And he replied: "God forgive you, my son, for you ought to believe that in every place God can give you sweet water."

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The food of good and evil men. Written by Saint Eradius.

THERE was a wise and holy man to whom it happened that, eating in company with some friars, he saw, by divine revelation, that some were eating honey, some bread, and some ashes; and wondering much, he prayed God, and said: "O Lord, I pray thee to make clear to me this miracle, that the same food being placed before all, it appears to me that they do not eat the same, but I see such a variety and change." And he heard a voice which said: "Those who appear to you to eat honey are those who, being at table, give God thanks humbly and pray to him with their hearts, and their prayers rise to him like incense; those who appear to eat bread are those who give thanks as much as they think their duty, but whose thoughts are not much raised to heaven; and those who seem to be eating ashes are those who murmur, and are not content with the food placed before them, but seek greedily for better food, and take too much pleasure in it. It is not well to do so, but in all things God should be glorified, as the apostle teaches when he says, 'Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.'"

Of anger and its cure. Written by Saint Eradius.

A HOLY man says, that if one who is injured and offended voluntarily forgives, this is according to the nature of Christ, and he who is ill treated and seeks to revenge himself is of the nature of Adam, but he who injures any one without cause is of the nature of the devil.

A friar, having received ill treatment from another, went to complain to the Abbot Sisoe, and told him that he wished

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to be revenged; and the abbot begging him to leave vengeance to God, he answered he was not satisfied till he saw himself revenged. And the Abbot Sisoe, seeing him so ill-disposed, said: "Since you have so hardened your heart, come, and let us pray together a little;" and praying, he said: "O Lord, there is no need of Thee here, because, as this brother says, we can revenge ourselves;" which words brought the friar to repentance, and he threw himself at his feet, asking pardon and promising to make peace with the man who had injured him. One brother, having received an injury from another, complained to an old and good friar, who told him, when he thought of this injury and felt himself tempted to impatience, to remember that this was permitted to happen because of his sins. The Abbot Sisoe also said that every misfortune should be committed to God, believing and confessing it to be the judgment of God by reason of sin, as without His will and permission nothing can occur.

Of a friar who prayed God that he might see the soul pass from the body, and he saw the death of a just man and of a sinner. Written by Saint Eradius.

THE wish came to a friar to see how the souls of the just man and the sinner pass from the body, and God, willing to comfort him, did it in this manner. As he stood in his cell a wolf came to him and took his garment in his teeth and drew him out, and understanding that this was the work of God, he rose and followed him; and the wolf led him to the city, where he left him. And as the friar was resting himself without the city, at a monastery in which was a very famous solitary, it happened that the solitary fell sick and drew near to death, and the stranger friar, seeing them prepare many candles and other things for that solitary who was passing away, and also the grief of the people, as if God had nourished the city for his sake, and hearing

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them say, "If he dies we shall all be in danger," he wondered much, and waited to see that which he desired, — the soul of the just man and the sinner leave the body. And after some time, the solitary dying, the friar saw a multitude of demons coming for him, among whom was one very terrible, with a fiery hook, and he heard a voice from heaven, which said to the demon that had the hook: "Even as this soul made no place in itself for me, nor let me rest in it for one hour, so shalt thou drag it out without mercy;" and suddenly after this voice he saw the demon wound his heart with that hook, and torment him much, and drag his soul from his body. And after these things that stranger friar entered into the city, and he found an infirm pilgrim who lay in the public square, and there was no one who would take him in, and for pity he staid with him one day to comfort him; and as the pilgrim approached death, the friar saw the Archangel Michael and the Angel Gabriel come for his soul, and they seated themselves one on the one side, and the other on the other, and it seemed to him they were entreating the soul to pass away. Then said the Angel Gabriel to St. Michael: "Take this soul and let us go." St. Michael replied: "God has commanded us to draw it away without pain, therefore we should use no force;" and in a loud voice he said: "Lord God, what wilt thou that we shall do with this soul that will not leave the body?" And a voice answered: "I send David with the psaltery and the other singers, so that hearing the most sweet melodies, drawn by so much sweetness, it shall part from the body." And after this David came with the singers, and as they placed themselves around the pilgrim, singing sweet hymns, his soul with wonderful joy departed from the body, and St. Michael took that soul and bore it to heaven with those holy ones, singing songs and wonderful praises.

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Of a hermit who saw the demons come for the soul of a sinner. Written by Saint Eradius.

A HERMIT once went to the city to sell his work, and it happened that he seated himself at the door of a sick and wretched man, and while waiting there he saw many black and frightful figures come upon black horses, each one with a lance of fire in his hand.

When they reached the door they dismounted and went in with great violence, and the sick man, seeing them, cried out and said: "O Lord, help me!" But the demons replied: "Now you call God to mind when the sun has set; why did you not seek Him when it was day and you had time? When you were in prosperity you forgot Him, and never prayed to Him, sinful man that you were, rebellious, and offending against Him, not thinking what place you were preparing for yourself; now you see that the just God gives into our hands all the malicious, envious, murmurers, thieves, and murderers, and we enjoy and increase their torments.

"This until now you never thought of, and because you did not seek repentance when you could, now by God's justice you cannot find it, and there remains for you neither hope nor fear of Him;" and saying this, they tore the soul from the body cruelly, and bore it to perdition.

Of a king who visited a sick man and exhorted him to repentance, and of his hopeless death. Written by Saint Eradius.

THERE was a cavalier of the province of Marsi whose words and works were more useful to others than to himself; for though he pleased the king much by his wisdom, he displeased God more by the iniquity of his life; and the king, who was a good man, often admonished him

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and advised him to change his life; but he, as a vain cavalier, gave no heed to him, though he would promise to amend. At last he became very ill, and the king came to visit his dear servant and begged him to repent before he grew worse, and he replied that he would do so when he was cured, the devil thus deceiving him. And the king, coming once more, spoke to him again, and he answered in despair: "Why do you come to say these things to me? No good can they do me." The king said with sorrow: "You must be out of your mind, for you speak like one insane;" and he said to the king: "Indeed I am not insane, but compelled by my evil conscience, I speak as I feel." And the king, asking him why he was so hopeless and despairing, he told him that not long before, two beautiful youths had come into his room and had placed themselves, one at his head, and the other at his feet; and one of them gave him a book which he read, and in it were written all the good deeds he had ever done, and they were few and worth but little; and the youth took back the book and said nothing: and suddenly there came a great number of evil spirits, so many that the house seemed to be full of them and surrounded by them; and the one who appeared to be their chief gave to one of them a very large book, in which were written all his sins, and commanded it should be given to the sick man to read; and taking it, he found written in it all his sins, not only his sinful works, but all his evil thoughts and desires. And that spirit said to those beautiful ones who stood at his head and feet: "Why do you stay here, now that you know he is ours and not yours?" And they answered: "You speak the truth indeed; take him then and bear him to eternal pain;" and with these words the good spirits disappeared, and two evil spirits took his wretched soul with torments and bore it to perdition. And having told this to the king, he died in despair, and the repentance which he would not seek for his benefit he found too late. And St. Gregory, who saw this, says it was not only revealed for his good but for ours, in order that we who are still in the land of the living may be warned and repent, that our last hour

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may not find us unprepared. And by those books in which his good and evil doings were written we are to learn that all we do or think or say is remembered and will be judged at the last day, and will be brought to our remembrance, whether good or bad.

And we are to understand that as the good angels brought first a little book of a few good works and then the demons a large one full of evil works, so this sinner in his youth did a little good, but afterwards, when grown older, committed many crimes.

Of a friar whose life was bad, and whose death was worse by the judgments of God. Written by Saint Eradius.

THERE was a friar in a monastery who made himself very useful, but who led a sinful life, though he was admonished by the oldest and wisest of the monks; but he gave no heed, and despised their reproofs. Notwithstanding this, they kept him among them, because the work, which he did so well, was very profitable. He was a great drinker and very wasteful, and hated holy things, so that on festivals he chose rather to stay in his workroom than to go to the church with the others to hear the word of God. So it was said of him, according to the proverb: "He who does not of his will go into the door of the church shall be carried against his will into the door of hell." This man in God's time fell sick, and feeling himself growing worse, he called his companions, and impelled by divine power, he told them that he had seen the recompense made ready for him. And he said that he saw Satan in torments, and with him Caiphas who crucified Christ, and near them was a place prepared for him; which things the monks hearing, they tried to comfort him, saying that at least he could now repent and seek forgiveness; but he replied he had no longer time to repent, for he saw that his judgment was fulfilled, and so saying, he died without change. The monks buried him

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without the walls of the monastery, and made no prayers for him; for they were certain he had died without hope. There is truly a great contrast between the righteous and the sinful man: we read that St. Stephen, dying for the truth, saw heaven opened and Christ ready to receive him, that he might meet his death more courageously, seeing the glory that was prepared for him; and on the contrary, this wretched man, dying, saw eternal torments prepared for him, so that not for his good, but for our example, he should die the more hopelessly.

This happened in the province of Marsi, and being made known to the people, many repented and reformed without delay; and may God grant that all who read or hear this may do likewise.

The goodness and long-suffering of God. Written by Saint Eradius.

A HOLY man, being once asked by a cavalier if God receives the sinner who repents and turns to Him, answered him: "Yes, willingly;" and he proved it by many texts of scripture, and then he said to him: "Tell me, my brother, if you tear your coat, do you immediately throw it away?" And the cavalier replied: "No, I should have it mended." And the holy man said: "If then you have a coat mended instead of throwing it away, how can you doubt that God will pardon men made in his own likeness?"

The sayings of Santa Sincletica recorded for our instruction.

ST. SINCLETICA says that as powerful medicines cure the infirmities of the body, so the sicknesses of the body cure the sins of the soul; and it is a great merit to have patience in sickness and to thank God. When Satan cannot by poverty tempt a man to impatience, he will enrich

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him to seek to make him fall through love of money; and when he cannot make him sin by evil treatment or abuse, he will try to do so by causing him to be honoured and praised; and when he stands in time of health, he will cause him if he can to fall ill; and when he cannot overcome him by pleasures, he will seek to do so by sufferings, and to make him lose courage; but when one is sick or afflicted, then should be remembered the future judgment and suffering one has deserved, and thus pain will seem light and be patiently borne, as it is preferable to be punished and brought to repentance by God in this life rather than in the next.

If one is tried with fever, remember the words of the psalmist: "In the fire and in the water I will refresh thee;" and in passing through them one may look for the refreshment, and through tribulation man attains perfection.

If blindness comes upon us, let us not be disturbed — we have lost the instruments of pride, and with the eyes of the soul we may behold God; if we become deaf, let us not lament, but wait to hear the voice of the Lord in our hearts; and if the body wastes, have patience, and seek to increase the holiness of the soul.

The unworthy priest. Written by Saint Eradius.

THERE was a hermit in a solitary place to whom a priest sometimes came and administered the communion; and after some time a friar accused that priest of certain sins; and the hermit, being shocked to hear such things of him, would not admit him when he came, but drove him away. And after the priest had gone away the hermit heard a voice saying, "Men have taken justice out of my hands." And being much amazed, he was rapt in a vision; and he saw a well of pure water and a pitcher, and the rope was of gold, but there was a leper to draw the water, and so though he was thirsty, he would not drink of the water for fear of the leprosy; and he heard a voice saying,

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"Why do you not drink of the water? What does it matter that the leper draws it? He turns it into the pitcher, neither touching nor tasting it." And coming to himself and understanding what that vision meant, he received the communion from him as usual, understanding that a sinful priest does not spoil the sacrament.

Examples of the contempt of worldly goods. Written by Saint Eradius.

SOME Greeks once came to give alms in a city which was called Austriana, and to understand more fully the wants of the poor, they asked the deacons of that church to accompany them; and they took them to a leper, and they offered him charity, but he declined to receive it, saying he had palm leaves which he braided and earned enough to buy bread.

Then they went to the house of a poor woman with many children, and her daughter came to open it, and she was poorly and scantily dressed, and the mother was away washing clothes for hire; and wishing to give them charity, the daughter refused it, saying the mother had work enough to buy them bread, and the mother coming in, she also said the same, adding: "I have the Lord for my provider, and you seek to take him from me;" and they, seeing her faith, departed praising God.

One seeking to give alms to a poor sick old man, he said: "I do not wish you should deprive me of God my supporter, who has fed me for seventy years, and trusting in Him, I have wanted nothing."

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Of two who were judged and punished by the brothers, by which is shown the human pride that dwells in the judgments of men. Written by Saint Eradius.

IN the monastery of the Abbot Elias it happened that a brother fell into sin, for which he was driven away. And he went to the Abbot Anthony at the mountain, and staid with him some time, and humbly told him his story. And after a certain time St. Anthony sent him back to his convent, and when he returned he was again driven away by the brothers; so he went again to St. Anthony and told how they would not receive him, and at this St. Anthony was much disturbed, and he sent him to them again, saying: "The ship in a great tempest lost all that it had, and with much labour; thus empty it has reached the harbour, and would you sink the ship that is saved?" Which words being understood by those brothers to be against themselves, on account of the monk whom they had cast out, and hearing that St. Anthony had sent him to them again, they received him and forgave him his sin.

A brother was once found to be in sin; for which cause the holy fathers of the desert gathered themselves together and sent for the Abbot Moses, that he should come with the others to determine how they should punish that brother; but he would not come. Then the priest sent to him saying that he should come because all the brothers awaited him; then he filled a basket with sand and brought it with him on his shoulders.

And when the holy fathers saw him, they went to meet him, and asked him what basket was that. And he answered: "These are my sins which I carry with me and do not see them, and I am come to judge the sins of others." At which words, being all much moved, they charitably forgave the erring brother.

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How we must not judge or reveal the sins and failings of others. Written by Saint Eradius.

THE Abbot Joseph asked the Abbot Pastor: "How can I become a worthy monk?" And he replied: "Do you wish to find peace both in this world and the next? Then keep yourself humble and do not judge others or interfere in their affairs."

A brother asked the Abbot Joseph if he should discover the sin of some brother should he conceal it or make it known; and he said: "When one for the sake of charity covers the sin of his neighbour, God covers his, but if he manifests it without reason, God will manifest his."

A holy man, seeing a sinner, began to weep and say: "This man sins to-day, and so shall I fall to-morrow unless God holds me up;" so if a man sins before you, do not think him worse than yourself, but bear in mind that you also are a sinner and apt to fall.

How we who are religious persons should guard the heart, and how a religious man should never give pain to another. Written by Saint Eradius.

IT being asked of the Abbot Agathon which is the greatest thing, the guardianship of the heart or of the life, he answered thus: "Man is like a tree, his life is like the leaves, and the care of his heart is similar to the fruit; since then it is written, that every tree which beareth not fruit shall be cut down, it is needful first to use diligence to bear good fruit within. And there is also need of good care without, as the leaves are necessary to the good shelter of the fruit." The Abbot Agathon was wise and of great understanding, diligent and fervent, moderate in his food, plain in his dress, and perfect in every virtue.

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There came once to the Abbot Achillas three monks, among whom was one who bore an evil character; and they sitting with him and seeing him weave nets to catch fish, one of them said: "I pray thee make me a net for fishing." He answered that he could not; and being prayed by the other that he would make it, and that he would remember him, he again excused himself, saying that he had not the time.

Afterwards he was entreated by the third, who was not of such good reputation, and he said to him: "Make me one I pray thee, that I may receive it at thy hand, and I will keep it for reverence of thee;" and he answered him gently and said that he would make it willingly. The others, wondering at that, asked him in secret why he had promised to make the net for that man and not for them, to whom he answered in these words: "I do not make it for you because I am occupied, and I trust that you will not be disturbed; but if I denied it to him, I fear lest he should doubt and say: 'For the evil which he has heard of me he holds me in dislike and will not make me the net.' Whence not to grieve him nor give him cause of sadness, I will exert myself and serve him."

Against driving a sinner to despair. Written by Saint Eradius.

A HOLY father said that the man who has good words and not works is like a tree which bears leaves but no fruit, and also that good works should be accompanied by wise words. A brother, having fallen into grievous sin, went to an old and famous monk, but did not tell him that he was himself the one who had sinned, but he asked him: "If any one should fall into such a sin could he be saved?" The monk, being indiscreet, replied: "You are the sinful man, and you have lost your soul." And the sinner said to himself: "Since I have lost my soul, I will return to the world and enjoy it," and he determined to do so; but

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before he left the monastery he told these things to the Abbot Silvanus, a wise and holy man. Then the Abbot Silvanus proved to him by the scriptures that his case was not desperate, because others had been tempted and sinned, but repenting had found mercy; and the sinner, taking courage, confessed that he was himself the one who had fallen, and prayed him to help him; and the Abbot Silvanus, like a wise and good physician, comforted him and gave him the spiritual remedies suitable for his case. And after a certain time the Abbot Silvanus met that famous holy father, and he said to him: "See this friar who by your evil counsel was driven to despair; now he is another man, and he shines like a star among the others."

This example is related that we may see the danger of revealing our temptations and sins to men without discretion.

The Abbot Agathon was tempted by some monks, who accused him of many sins; and he confessed them all, except that of heresy. Written by Saint Eradius.

THE Abbot Agathon was a man much celebrated for humility and patience, and hearing of his fame, some monks went to visit him and to prove his patience.

And they told him that many were scandalized by him, saying that he was proud and held others in contempt; that he was called an evil speaker, a sinful and worldly minded man; and that he accused others to justify himself; to all which he replied and said with great humility: "All these sins I am liable to, and I cannot deny it. Pray for me, my brothers, a miserable sinner, a prey to so many temptations; pray Jesus Christ to forgive me, and bring me to repentance." And wondering at such humility, they wished to tempt him still more, and said, indeed many affirmed him to be a heretic, to which he answered, that though but a sinful man, a heretic he was not, and that from this sin God had kept him; and they begged to know why he had not been

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disturbed by being accused of so many other sins, but could not support the charge of heresy; and being urged by them, he told them he had confessed himself guilty of those first sins through humility, which virtue is taught us by our Saviour Jesus Christ, who says, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart," and who, being reviled and falsely accused by the Jews, patiently bore it all, to give us a lesson of humility.

But the reason he could not endure the accusation of heresy was because that is deserting God and joining Satan; and he who is separated from the Saviour has no one to pray for his sins, but should he return to the faith, he is received by the compassionate Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

The question of the evil spirit to the Abbot Apollos. Written by Saint Eradius.

A POSSESSED person was once brought to the cell of the Abbot Apollos, who would not at first cast out the evil spirit, by reason of his great humility. But after some time, being overcome by the entreaties of the family, he consented to do so, and commanded the unclean spirit to depart in the name of Christ; and the demon replied, that being conjured by this name, he had no choice but to submit, but he wished to enquire what was meant by the passage of scripture which said, that at the day of judgment God would place the goats on his left hand and the sheep on his right. To which the Abbot Apollos answered, that the goats signified sinful men, of whom he was one, a miserable sinner and deserving punishment; and that the sheep signified good and just men, who were known to God alone. And the evil spirit cried out in a loud voice and said that he was conquered and driven away by so much humility; and so saying he departed, and all those who were present glorified God.

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The stolen Bible of the Abbot Anastasius. Written by Saint Eradius.

I WISH to make known the wonderful and praiseworthy humility and patience of the Abbot Anastasius, in order that the tranquillity of his soul, being considered, may be imitated.

This Abbot Anastasius had a very beautiful book, called the Bible, which being seen by a friar who had come to make him a visit, he admired it and took it secretly and went away; and the same day the abbot wished to read his Bible, and not finding it, he knew immediately that the friar had taken it; but he felt sure that he who had done this evil, if he were accused of it, would deny it and perjure himself; and he would not call him back or ask him for it, lest he should occasion him to sin still more. And the friar took the Bible for sale to a city and asked a certain price for it. And one of the friars, wishing to buy it, asked him to leave it with him, that he might show it to some one who understood such things better than he did; that he might ascertain if it was worth the price asked for it. And the seller was willing to do so, not thinking that he would go to show it to the Abbot Anastasius; but he went to him and showed him the Bible and enquired if it appeared to him to be worth what was asked for it. And when he saw it, the abbot said nothing to betray that it belonged to him; but he said that it appeared to him to be an excellent book, and well worth the price. And the friar took the money to the one who offered it for sale and told him he had shown the book to the Abbot Anastasius, and that he said it was not too much for it. And the seller, hearing that, was shocked and repentant, and asked if the abbot said nothing beside; and being answered, "No," his regret and mortification were increased, thinking of so much patience; but not wishing to betray himself to the friar, he pretended to remember some reason why he could not sell it at that time.

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And taking the book with him, he went to the abbot and threw himself at his feet, greatly ashamed; and prayed him, with tears, to forgive him, and take back his book; but this he refused to do, saying: "My son, let it be yours in peace, with the blessing of God, instead of mine;" at which words the poor friar was still more ashamed, and told him that he could not have peace of conscience until he took the book, which the abbot did, and the friar, won by his holiness, became his servant, and remained with him until the close of his life.

The patience of a poor sick man. Written by Saint Eradio.

A HOLY father fell sick, and not being able to eat anything for several days, one of his disciples told him he could prepare a dish which he knew he would like, and he hoped he would try and eat it, which he promised to do, and the disciple prepared the dish; but by mistake, instead of seasoning it with honey, he mixed with it rancid oil; and he did not discover it, because the jars in which the oil and honey were kept were alike; and when the sick man tasted it, he could not eat it, but he said nothing, and the disciple to induce him to eat it, said: "I will eat some to keep you company;" but as soon as he tasted it, he perceived the mistake, and asked why his master had not told him at once, and he would not have urged him to eat of it; and he answered him, that unless God saw fit that he should not eat, the mistake would not have happened, and the oil been mixed with the dish instead of the honey; thus consoling the disciple, and setting him an example of much patience.

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The friar who fasted through vanity. Written by Saint Eradius.

THE holy fathers of the monastery of the desert were one day dining together, and one of them said to the brother who was serving them: "I pray you to procure me some salad, because I do not eat meat;" and the servant called loudly to another to bring some salad for that friar who never tasted meat. Which being heard by the Abbot Theodorus, he said to that brother who had asked for the salad: "Indeed, my brother, you would have done better to have dined alone in your cell upon meat than to say these words before so many good people, from vanity."

The friar who found fault with the monks who laboured. Written by Saint Eradius.

A PILGRIM friar came to visit the Abbot Silvanus, who lived upon Mount Sinai, and seeing the monks work with their hands, said to them: "Why do you labour for the meat that perisheth? Do you not know that it is written, 'Mary hath chosen the good part'?" And the Abbot Silvanus, hearing that, said to Zacharias, one of his disciples: "Give this pilgrim a book to read, and put him in an empty cell;" which he did, and he remained there until the evening, wondering why he was not called to dinner; and waiting, listening some time longer, and finding no one came for him, not being able to bear it, he left the cell, and went to the abbot, and said: "Have not the monks dined?" And the abbot replied: "We have all dined;" and he said: "Why then did you not send for me?" And the abbot answered in mockery: "You are a spiritual man and have no need of bodily food; but we are bodily men, and seeing that we need food, we labour to earn it; but you, who have with

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Mary chosen the good part, you can read and pray all day, because you do not need food."

Which words brought the stranger to repentance, and he said: "I see, my brothers, that there is need of both Martha and Mary, for while Martha labours, Mary can, in consequence, worship at the feet of the Saviour; and the active and contemplative life are both required, and the one helps the other."

The impatient friar. Written by Saint Eradius.

THERE was a monk in that monastery who was impatient, and seeing that he could not live in harmony with the brothers, he determined to go into the desert and live in solitude, that he might find peace where there would be none to quarrel with. So he went into the desert; and one day he went for water, and as soon as he filled the pitcher and set it on the ground, it fell and spilled the water; and he filled it again and again, but, as it pleased God, the pitcher fell and spilled all the water, which the monk, seeing, took the pitcher in anger and dashed it on the ground and broke it; and coming to himself and seeing how he had been overcome by anger he said: "I see that here in solitude I give way to impatience. I will return to the monastery, for temptation comes everywhere, and one must watch and pray." And asking help of God, he returned to the monastery and learned to have patience.

The discretion of the Abbot Panfutius. Written by Saint Eradius.

THE Abbot Panfutius never drank wine, and it once happened that while journeying he fell among some thieves, who were drinking. It being known to the chief that he did not drink wine, and seeing that he was exhausted and weary, he filled a cup with wine, and holding

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a drawn sword in his hand he said: "Drink, or I kill you." Then Panfutius, being a discreet man, considered that he gave it to him for charity; and wishing to gain the robber, he relaxed the rigor of his abstinence and took the wine cheerfully; and when he had drunk, the robber said to him, repenting of his rudeness: "Pardon me, my father, if I have annoyed you." And he replied: "I hope in God that for this cup of wine you have given me God may have mercy upon you, both in this world and the next;" and the robber, wonderfully changed, said: "I believe in God, and from this day I will lead a different life." And through divine grace the others, following his example, became good and holy men.

The monk who could bear with the faults of others. Written by Saint Eradius.

THERE were two monks, one old, the other much younger; and the elder proposed to the other that they should live together.

And notwithstanding his entreaties, the younger would not consent to do so, because he knew the other to be a most holy man, who did not think a monk ought to be sinful, even in his thoughts. And he answered him, that if he would leave him for a week, at the end of that time he would take in into consideration. And the week being ended, the old monk returned, still desiring they might have one home; and the younger one, wishing to know if he had patience enough to bear the sins of others, said to him: "Oh my father, since you left me I have fallen into many temptations and great sins." And the other replied: "Do you desire to repent?" And the younger monk, saying that he did, he told him that he would willingly assist him by performing for him the half of any penance that might be imposed on him; and the younger, seeing him ready to regard the failings of others with kindness, decided that they could live together in harmony; and they did so until the death of the elder brother.

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How the Abbot Piammon shed tears when he saw a worldly woman. Written by Saint Eradius.

THE most blessed Bishop Athanasius once desired the Abbot Piammon to come to him in Alexandria; and as he went, in company with some friars, they met on the road some secular persons who said: "Let us stop and do reverence to these friars that they may bless us; for as they often speak to God, their lips are holy."

And as they entered into the city they met a woman very gaudily dressed; and the abbot began to weep, and his companions asking him why he did so, he said: "Two things move me to tears; one is the perdition of that woman, the other is the thought that I am less careful to ornament myself for the sight of God than she is to adorn herself to please sinful men."

A friar once enquired of the Abbot Sisoe if, in the more ancient times, the holy fathers were so much persecuted by demons; and he answered him that their persecutions are more grievous in these more modern days, because as the day of judgment draws nearer they become more envious and despairing; and it is also the case that they do not care to give great battle to weak and cowardly men, whom they can easily conquer; but to those whom they see to be strong and fervent, they give hard warfare.

A friar asked a holy father why the monks did not now come to so much perfection as formerly; and he told him because then there was so much charity that each one laboured to draw his neighbour to be friend with himself, that he might lead him to God; but now, charity having grown cold, each one seeks his own welfare rather than that of others, through the want of the grace of God.

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The deaths of the Abbots Piammon, Agathon, and Sisoe. Written by Saint Eradius.

THE Abbot Piammon, passing from this life, said to the brothers who were standing around him: "My brothers, since I came into the desert and made this cell I have not, that I can remember, eaten any bread but that which I have earned by my own labour, or spoken a word of which I have now need to repent; nevertheless, now that I am passing to God, I feel that I am only beginning to serve him."

The Abbot Agathon when dying remained silent, with his eyes open, a long time; and one of them, touching him, said: "Where do you find yourself, my father, in this hour?" And he answered: "In the presence of the judgment of God." And the friar asking him if he feared it, he replied: "Although I have always studied with all my strength to observe the commandments of God, still I cannot trust in myself, for I am but mortal; and I cannot know that my works are accepted of God." And the friars said in astonishment: "Then you do not now know that they are so?" "No," he answered, "not until I am in his presence; because far different is divine from human judgment, and what may appear holy to men is imperfect in the sight of God."

Many holy fathers being around the Abbot Sisoe, who was dying, they saw his face brighten, and he said to them: "Lo! the Abbot Anthony is among us;" and after waiting a little, he said: "The choir of prophets is with me;" and soon after, his face growing brighter: "Behold the blessed apostles have come!" And it appearing as if he was speaking with some one, they asked him who it was, and he said: "The holy angels have come for my soul, and I pray them to leave me still time to repent." And those holy fathers telling him that he no longer needed to repent, he replied and said: "In truth, my brothers, it does not appear to me, in this hour, that I have begun my repentance." At which

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words those holy men perceived that he was perfectly humble; and after this his face became bright as the sun, and he exclaimed: "Behold, the Lord has come!" and saying these words, he yielded his soul to God.

Against vain speculations. Written by Saint Eradius.

A HERMIT coming to visit the Abbot Pemen, he received him very graciously, and when they had embraced each other, he prayed him to seat himself. And the hermit shed tears and proposed many difficult questions about the scriptures and celestial things; and the abbot turned his face towards another friar and made him no answer. And the hermit, growing angry, went away, and he said to the disciples of the abbot that his fatigue in coming to see the abbot had been all in vain, for he had not condescended even to answer him. And the disciples, going in, asked him why he would not answer that holy man, who had come to visit him, and who was very famous in his own country; and he said: "He is above, and speaks of celestial things; but I am below, and hardly know how to speak of earthly things; if he had spoken to me of the failings and defects of the monks, perhaps I should have answered him; but he spoke of heavenly things, which I do not understand." And his disciples went out and said to that hermit: "Our abbot does not wish to speak of high things, but he would answer willingly any practical questions." And the hermit repented himself, and returned and said: "What shall I do, my father, to conquer the sins of my heart?" And he replied to him at once and said: "Now I will answer you willingly, you are indeed welcome." And when they had talked together, the hermit said: "In truth, abbot, your way is the right and safe one;" and thanking him warmly, he returned to his home.

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Of one who heard the demons give an account of themselves to their prince. Written by Saint Eradius.

A FRIAR, once going into the desert late one evening, found a cave, and being weary went in to rest himself. And he began to say his prayers, and so he was awake until past midnight, and at last he lay down, intending to sleep a little; and just then he heard and saw many legions of demons come into the cave, and in the midst of them was a prince, larger than the rest and terrible to behold. And when they had all passed in, the prince seated himself on a high seat and questioned closely all those malignant spirits respecting the evil that each one of them had done; and those of them whom he found negligent, and who had not overcome the men to whom he had sent them with temptations, he drove away in disgrace and reproved with fury as having wasted their time, and those who had deceived and ruined many, he honoured and praised highly as valiant warriors. Among them was one very wicked spirit, who boasted much of the victory which he had gained over a certain well-known and honoured monk, whom he told the prince he had overcome this night, after having fought against him in vain for fifteen years; for which cause there was great rejoicing, and he was much admired and congratulated. And when it was near daybreak, the demons suddenly vanished; and the friar, doubting of the truth of this vision, remembering that the evangelist declares Satan to be a liar and the father of lies, determined to ascertain the truth respecting the friar whom the spirit boasted to have overcome. And as he went, with that intention, into the country where he lived, which is called Pelusio, he met one of his neighbours, and he enquired of him and ascertained that, the night before, that friar had fled and returned to the world and a sinful life; and so he knew that the vision he had seen the night before was true; and meditating on our hard and dangerous warfare, he returned weeping to his cell.

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How a religious man converted his sister. Written by Saint Eradius.

THERE was a hermit in Egypt of great sanctity and humility, who had a sister in the neighbouring city whose beauty was a snare of the devil to draw many souls into perdition; and many holy friars recommended him to leave his cell and go to that city to save her from ruin.

And as they constantly told him it was his duty, at last he went to the city where his miserable sister lived; and when he approached her house, one who knew him ran forward and told her that her brother the hermit was coming, and she immediately hurried out of the house, barefooted and bareheaded as she was, to meet him, and embrace him; but he drew back, and said: "Oh my sister, have pity at last upon your unhappy soul; and think, as many have been brought to perdition by you, what torments are prepared for you if you do not, while you may, repent!" At which words she, being both terrified and repentant, said to him: "Do you believe, my brother, that God will receive me, and that I can find a place for repentance?" And he replied that he could not doubt it. And she threw herself at his feet, and begged him to take her with him into the desert; and he told her to put on her veil and come; but she said: "Let us go now, my brother; it is better for me to be disgraced in the sight of men than to return into that evil city." And her brother, seeing her so much changed, went with her, leaving behind all the money and jewels she had.

And as they went the brother admonished her and induced her to repent; and he saw some monks approaching them, and said to his sister she had better follow him at a distance, as they might be scandalized at seeing him in her company, as they could not know who she was, and she did so; and after the friars had passed, he called her, saying: "Come, my sister, let us go on our way." And as she made no answer he went back to look for her, and found her

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fallen down dead, and that her footprints were stained with blood, because she, being very delicate, had come barefooted, not having wished to enter the house for her sandals, by reason of her extreme contrition. This caused him many tears and lamentations; and fearing her perdition, he returned to the desert and related all that had happened, with great sorrow, to the holy fathers who lived near him. And these good men had many doubts of her salvation, some of them thinking it might be hoped for, while others thought it impossible; until God revealed to one of them that she was saved and in great glory, because she was entirely changed, and had not wished to return to her house, even for her jewels; and because she died with many tears, in great sorrow, and in a good state of heart; and God accepted her repentance, for though it lasted but a short time it was great in quantity, as it filled all her heart.

The neglected garden. Written by Saint Eradius.

THERE was once a monk who had fallen into many sins and departed from the habits of a religious life, and he desired to reform and return to his former state; but not being able to do so, he grieved and lamented, saying: "Woe is me! How shall I return to my former life?" And being in such trouble, he went to a holy father and laid his case before him, who told him this history.

There was a man who had a beautiful and fruitful garden, and through neglect he let it remain uncultivated, so that it produced nothing but briars and thorns. And after a certain time he wished to restore it to its former condition, and he requested one of his sons to go and cultivate the garden, and he went. But he found nothing but a mass of thorns and weeds, which had spread abundantly, so he was discouraged; and saying to himself in despair, "I can never clear away all these briars," he laid himself down to sleep, and he did so every day. And after many days the father came to see how his work went on, and finding that he had

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done nothing, he asked him why he had not even begun his labour; and he told him the reason was that he despaired of being able to accomplish it. So his father told him to proceed in this way: that he must work each day just as much time as he had been in the habit of sleeping, and so, little by little, the work would grow in his hands, and he would feel encouraged and not be so faint-hearted; and the young man doing so, little by little he cleared up all the garden. And he recommended the monk to follow his example, and to take courage and persevere in accomplishing a little at a time, which he did; and by God's grace he was finally restored to the goodness of his former days.

The hermit who was the son of a pagan priest. Written by Saint Eradius.

THERE was a venerable holy father in the Thebaid who said he was the son of a priest who served an idol, and that once, when he was a little child, he followed his father secretly when he went to sacrifice to the idol. And he told how he saw the prince of the demons seated in state, and all his army standing before him; and there came in an inferior prince, who worshipped him, and asked whence he came. And he replied from a certain country where he had caused a great war and the consequent shedding of much human blood; and the chief enquired how much time he had occupied in doing this evil, and he answered, "Thirty days;" and he had him severely beaten, saying he had accomplished too little for so long a time. And after a while another presented himself, and the chief asking of his doings, he reported that he had been upon the sea and had caused a great storm, and that many vessels were wrecked and lives lost; and the devil enquired in what time he had done this; and on his answering, "Thirty days," he ordered him also to be beaten, saying he had done too little for that time. Then there came another, who said that, being in a city where they were celebrating a marriage, he

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caused a dispute to arise, so that the bridegroom was left dead, and that he had accomplished this in ten days; and he was also punished for having done so little evil in so much time.

Last of all came another who said that he had spent fifty years in a monastery tempting a monk, and that he had this night conquered him; on hearing which the prince came down from his throne and embraced him and placed his own crown upon his head, and seating him on the throne, declared that he had done a great deed.

"Now," said the hermit, "having heard these things, I said to myself: 'I know that the priestly order is a great thing;' and as it pleased God, I embraced the true faith and followed the way of salvation, declaring myself a Christian."

A selection of a few chapters from the life of the Patriarch John of Alexandria. Written by Saint Leontius, Bishop of Neapolis in Cyprus.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

I BEING once in Alexandria, where I had gone to pass the feast of the holy martyrs Cyrus and John, and sitting there talking with a few fathers about the divine scriptures and the care of souls, it happened that a pilgrim, as he passed, asked charity of us who were disputing on the scriptures; and he said that he had fled from a prison in Syria. And as we none of us found any money about us, we told him to go with God's peace. Which thing being observed by a servant of one of us, whose name was Zacharias, he, moved with compassion, ran after the pilgrim, who had already departed, and gave him a certain piece of money which he had, and said that he must pardon him that he gave so little, for he had only one little piece of money remaining, though he had a wife and two children.

Seeing this, I was wonderfully moved and ashamed; and

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I said so to the venerable Mennas who sat by my side, and who had been almoner of the Patriarch John. And he, seeing me thus wonder, and hearing me praise that blessed poor man who had given alms to the pilgrim, said to me: "Do not wonder; know that he has had a good master, who has taught him thus to give." Then, as I prayed him to tell me who had taught him, he said: "This man was servant to the most holy Patriarch John; and like a good son and disciple, he follows the doctrine of his father and master, who many times said to him: 'My son Zacharias, be merciful, and be sure God will not fail thee.' And so has it happened to him that God has sent much wealth into his hands, and he gives everything to the poor, so that he himself and his family often suffer great need. And often has he been found at prayer, and heard to say to God with wonderful fervour and joy: 'Now they will see which is most able, Thou to send me wealth, or I to dispense it to the poor. And well do I know who will conquer, for certainly, Lord, I know that Thou art rich and a sufficient governor and provider all our life; therefore I do not fear to distribute what Thou sendest me.' And it has sometimes happened that when he has had nothing to give to the poor, and they have asked charity of him, he has gone and sold himself to some artisan for a certain sum of money, agreeing to serve him a certain time, and has taken the price and given it secretly to the poor; and that none may know his virtue, he says, when he sells himself, that his family is in need." Now Mennas, seeing that I heard these things with attention, and was as it were stupefied, wondering at such beautiful virtue, said to me: "Now dost thou wonder at this? Thou wouldst wonder more if thou shouldst hear the virtues and the deeds of the most holy Patriarch John." Then said I, "What more could I hear?" He answered: "Now believe me, I have seen works in him which exceed every human power; and if thou wilt condescend to come and dine with me, I will tell thee of his wonderful works, which I have heard and seen while conversing with him." Then, for the desire which I felt to hear that which he promised me, I took him by the

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hand and went with him; and seeing that he set out the table as if anxious to do me honour, I said to him: "It does not seem a just thing to me, my dearest brother, to take the food of the body before that of the soul. Therefore I pray thee that thou wilt give me first that food which thou hast promised me; that is, that thou wilt relate to me the virtues of the most holy patriarch." And as he began to tell me of his virtues, and how he had never sworn an oath, I took paper and began to write the things which he told me, and to note them thus.

As soon as John — not for ambition, nor by human endeavours, but by divine Providence — was made Patriarch of Alexandria, he sent for the almoners and officers, and said to them before many people: "My brethren, it does not seem to me a just thing, that we should think of any one before Christ. Go then through the city and write the names of all my lords whom you may find there." And they, not understanding those words, prayed him that he would declare his meaning, and he answered and said: "Those whom you call poor I call my lords and helpers; for they are those who can assist us and give us the kingdom of heaven." And by his commandment all the names of the poor of the city being brought to him, the number of whom was seven thousand and five hundred, he ordered his almoner to provide every day, for each one, enough for all his necessities. And this being done, he went with all the clergy and the people to the church and received his consecration and his office. The following day he sent officers, dispensers, and clerks through all the city examining weights and measures; and he commanded that none should have various measures nor diverse weights, but that with one weight they should buy and sell. His commandment was in these words: "John, the least and most unworthy servant of the servants of Jesus Christ, to all those who are under his rule and jurisdiction. I command that no one shall hold various measures or diverse weights, because, as the scripture says, 'A false balance is abomination to the Lord;'

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that is, one who buys with one measure and sells with another. And after the present admonition whoever shall be found disobedient to my commandment shall be deprived of all his property, and I will have it given to the poor; because, according as St. Paul says, 'Prelates will have to render an account of the souls of their subjects;' and as much as in me lies I will lead you to all virtue and take from you the occasion of every sin." And it being afterwards told him that the rectors and judges of the church, blinded by love of gain, sold justice and perverted the judgment of the poor, he made them come before him, and not growing angry or speaking rudely, gently admonished them that they should take care that such rumours never again reached his ears; and to conquer them with kindness and remove from them every occasion of theft, he increased their salary so that they could live comfortably; and then he commanded them that they should receive nothing else, reminding them of the scripture, which says, in Job, that fire shall consume the tabernacles of those who willingly receive gifts and sell justice.

And from that time forward, by divine grace, the judges reformed themselves, so that some of them restored to the patriarch the salary which he had increased.

Some time afterwards, hearing it said that certain poor men had been wronged by some more powerful than themselves; and that when they would have gone to him to make their complaints, and ask for justice against their adversaries, they were not able to do so for fear of the clerks and other officers, who would not let them pass, he considered it best to remedy this injustice in the following manner: he ordered that every Wednesday and Friday his chair should be placed in the square before the church; and there he sat, conversing on the scriptures with a few learned and devout men until the third hour, waiting for poor and obscure persons to come and demand justice against their enemies. And that none should fear or be ashamed to come to him, he would in that hour have no guards or attendants about him, except one discreet and merciful man who en-

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couraged those who would to come to him. And when he had heard the poor man's petition, if he thought there was right on his side he commanded his officers that they should see justice done before they again sat down to eat. Therefore some of those who were with him said that they wondered at this new custom which he had commenced of sitting without the church two days in the week to judge the cause of the poor, to whom he made this reply: "If we, vile and unworthy men, have power and license to enter always, day and night, into the church of God and offer our petitions before Him; and if we pray God with importunity to hear and to help us, praying Him to succour us quickly and to send us His help in haste, how much more should we give our fellow servants an opportunity of proposing their prayers and petitions to us; and we should help them without delay, remembering those words of Christ, who said: 'With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.'" And it happened that one day, having sat waiting until the third hour, and seeing that no one came to him for any cause, he went away sad and weeping; and the most holy Sophronius hearing him, drew him aside, and said to him: "O holy father! what cause hast thou for weeping? Thou shouldst remember that we are all troubled when we see thee grieved." And he answered that the reason of his tears was that on that day he had gained no reward because no one had been to him to ask for justice. But the most holy Sophronius, inspired by God, answered his words and said: "Also to-day thou hast matter of great rejoicing, seeing thou hast made peace among thy people, so that no question nor division is found among them; and thou hast made men to be like angels, without quarrels, and every one loves his neighbour." Hearing these words, the most holy John was consoled; and he lifted his eyes to heaven and said: "My Lord, I thank Thee that Thou hast made me, an unworthy sinner, a priest and pastor of Thy people, and hast given me grace to feed them and to pacify them." And he continued this holy custom of sitting two days in the week to hear the questions of the poor; in the same manner, which

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some say, was afterwards followed by Constantine, son of the Emperor Heraclius, and his successor in the empire.

In the time of this most holy patriarch it happened that they of Persia came to make war in Syria; and taking the country, they took also many people, and many fled away for fear; and hearing the fame of the most holy patriarch, fled to him as to a harbour and refuge, praying for mercy — all of whom the most holy patriarch received, not as strangers and fugitives, but as his own dear brethren. And those who were wounded he immediately caused to be received into hospitals, and sent people who should have the care of them, and he provided doctors and medicines as they had need; and he constrained none to depart without their own will; and to all who were poor he allowed every day a certain measure of grain, which is called silique; and to the women he gave two measures, saying that one should do better by women, because they cannot wander about without danger, nor earn their support so easily as men. And there being among those poor persons some who wore rich garments, in which they had fled, those who had the charge of this charity said to the patriarch that it seemed well to them to give no alms to such. But the patriarch, somewhat disturbed, said to them: "If you will be stewards of my possessions, or rather of Christ's, of whom are all good things, obey simply the commandment of God, who says in the gospel, 'Give to him that asketh of thee.' But if you will curiously investigate to whom you should give, know that neither God nor we have need of suspicious ministers; and if these things which you distribute were mine, and born with me, perhaps I might be more cautious in dispensing them; but since they are of God, it is a reasonable thing that we should observe his commandment with regard to what is his own. Now if through little faith you fear that the riches of the church may fail, and that the goings out may be more than the comings in, you are not fit for this office, and you do not well to stay with me; because, since by Providence I have been made an unworthy steward of the goods of this church, if all the world were gathered

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together in Alexandria, and were in need, they would not fail, by reason of the immense treasures of God, and also of the church." And when he had, by these words, reproved his ministers, and sent them to their occupation, he began thus to speak to those who sat by him, and who wondered at the charity which God had conceded to him. "When I was a boy of fifteen years, being in Cyprus, I saw one night, in a dream, a beautiful young maiden, brighter than the sun, adorned above all human estimation, and she had a crown of olive branches on her head; and she stood before my bed, and touching me, awakened me. And seeing her distinctly, I made the sign of the cross and said to her: 'Who art thou, who art so bold as to come to my side while I sleep, and awake me?' And she, with a radiant face, answered, smiling, and said to me: 'I am the eldest daughter of the King;' hearing which words I immediately did her reverence; and she said to me: 'If thou wilt have me for thy friend, I will lead thee into the presence of the Emperor, and know certainly that no person has so much power with Him as myself; for I am she who caused Him to take on Himself flesh and come to redeem man.' And having said these words, she disappeared; and I, coming to myself, understood the vision, and said: 'Truly it was nothing else but compassion and mercy which made God take on Himself flesh.' And I quickly dressed myself, and not awaking any one in the house, I went to the church, and it was already after daybreak; and as I went I met a poor man, and I thought he was very cold, and I took off a lined garment which I wore and gave it to him, and I said within myself: 'Now by this I shall see if the vision which I had was true.' And as God knows, I had not yet reached the church when there met me a young man dressed in white, and gave me a hundred pieces of gold wrapped in a handkerchief, and said to me: 'Take them, my brother, and distribute them as thou wilt.' And I received them with great joy, but not feeling myself to be in need, I turned immediately to render them back to him who had given them, but I saw him no more. Then I said: 'The vision is

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true;' and from that time forward, when I gave anything to my needy neighbour, I said within myself: 'Now I shall see if God will give me a hundred for one.' And tempting God in this manner, and feeling that I always gained and received more than I gave, I knew that I did ill; and I reproved myself and said: 'Cease, my miserable soul, to tempt God, and serve him simply, since he has given thee so many proofs of himself.' Wherefore I am not disposed to follow the little faith of these my stewards, but I watch and see that they give to each one liberally." In these days a pilgrim, seeing so much compassion in the patriarch, would tempt him and try if he were very merciful; so he dressed himself in old clothes, and one day when the patriarch went to visit the sick in the hospital, which he did once or twice in every week, he came before him in the way and said to him: "Have mercy upon me, holy father, for I am a prisoner." The patriarch then commanded the steward that he should give him six large pieces of money; and when he had received them, he went away and changed his dress and came again before him on the other side, and once more asked for charity, saying that he was in great need. The patriarch again commanded that they should give him six pieces of gold. And when he was gone, the steward drew near to the ear of the patriarch and said: "Know, my lord, that he is the same who came before; but like a knave he changed his dress." The patriarch pretended not to know him, and although he was recognized, he again changed his dress and came to him the third time and asked for charity, representing himself as very miserable. So the steward said to the patriarch that he was the one who came at first; but for all this the most holy patriarch, not provoking himself to anger against the poor man, but wishing to conquer himself and to persevere in mercy, answered his steward and said: "Give him twice as much as before, for perhaps this is my God and Lord Jesus Christ, who is come in the form of a poor man to try me."

A foreign merchant, having lost all he had at sea, came to the patriarch, and with many tears prayed that he would

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have mercy on him and help him, as he helped the other poor. And having compassion on his misery, he ordered that five pounds of gold should be given him; and he bought certain merchandise, and again went to sea. And as it pleased the just God he was immediately wrecked, and lost everything except the ship; and returning to Alexandria, confiding in the infinite kindness of the patriarch, he went to him, and told him all that had befallen him, and asked him for charity, saying: "Father, have mercy on me, as God had mercy on the world." And the patriarch answered and said: "Believe me, my brother, that if thou hadst not mingled with the money of the church, which I gave thee, that which was left of thine own, thou wouldst not have been wrecked at sea; but because thy money was wrongfully acquired, by a just judgment of God thou hast lost with it that also which I had given thee." Nevertheless he commanded that they should give him twenty pounds more of gold, and he directed him to invest it in some sort of merchandise, and that he should mingle no other money with it.

This the merchant did, and having put the merchandise on board the ship in a certain place, there came a contrary wind and beat it on the shore, so that he lost all the merchandise and the ship, and only the men escaped. For which cause the merchant was so afflicted that he was almost in despair, and dared not go before the patriarch; but God, who watches over human safety, revealed to the patriarch what had happened. And having pity, he sent for the merchant to come without fear, and as he came, for the sorrow and shame that he felt, he sprinkled ashes on his head and face, tearing his garments; and thus disordered and torn, the patriarch received him, and comforted him, and said: "Blessed be God! I believe that from this day forth thou wilt be wrecked no more; and I know certainly that this has come to thee because thy ship was gained dishonestly." And he commanded that one of the ships of the church should be given him, laden with twenty thousand staia of grain; and he said to him that he should go and trade with it, and half that he gained should be for the

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church and half for himself. And the merchant embarked on board the ship, and having passed out of the harbour of Alexandria with his ship thus laden, there came a most powerful wind, which carried him before it for twenty days and nights, so that he could not enter any harbour; and he could in no way see or understand by what wind or in what direction they went; but the captain of the ship said that it seemed to him that he continually saw the patriarch, who stood at the helm and said to him: "Fear not, for thou sailest well." And after twenty days, discovering land, they saw that the ship had reached the island of Britain; and landing, they found that there was great famine and scarcity; and saying to the lord of the country how they had merchandise of grain, he said: "Blessed be God who has sent you! for we were in great need. Now choose which you will, either a piece of gold for each staia of grain, or as much tin as the weight of the grain." And he chose to have half in one mode and half in the other; and when he had received payment, he returned to Alexandria, with very fair weather. And the merchant, taking some of the tin which he had assigned to the patriarch, went to a goldsmith, a friend of his, and desired to know the value of it; and after making many trials, he found that it was fine silver; and the goldsmith, thinking that his friend wished to tempt him, put the silver back into the bag and returned it to the merchant and said: "God forgive thee, my friend, when didst thou find me false or deceitful that thou thus seekest to try me, giving me silver for tin?" And the merchant, wondering at these words, said: "Believe me, my brother, that I gave it to thee for tin, and such I believe it to be; but if He who turns water to wine has seen fit to make silver of tin, for the prayers of the patriarch, whose it is, I do not wonder; but that thou mayest believe me, come with me to the ship, and thou shalt see all the other tin;" and when he had seen it, he found that it was all fine silver. And this is not an incredible miracle, since He who multiplied the five loaves and changed the water into wine, who turned the rivers of Egypt into blood and the rod of

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Moses into a serpent, and who made the flame of Babylon to be like dew, could easily do this glorious miracle, to enrich his servant and steward, the Patriarch John, and to show forth his mercy to the merchant, and to us who hear this story.

Another time, on a Sunday morning, a man came to him in the church, who from great riches had fallen into deep poverty because thieves had entered his house and robbed him of all he possessed, and he prayed him timidly, and with reverence, to assist him. And he had compassion on him, especially because he had been a great prince in that land; and he said softly in the ear of his steward that he should give him fifteen pounds of gold: and as the steward went to give it, he took counsel with the overseer and with the housekeeper of the patriarch, and instigated by the devil, he gave the poor man only five pounds of gold.

Now a woman brought a letter to the patriarch, in which was written that she would give him a certain sum of money, that he should pray for her safety and that of her son; and having received the letter, he called his stewards and said to them: "How many pounds of gold did you give to that poor man?" They answered the sum which he had said; and he, knowing their falsehood, by the grace of the Holy Spirit which was in him, called the poor man, and asked him before them how much he had received, and he replied that he had received five pounds of gold, and no more. Then the patriarch took the letter which contained the five hundred pounds of gold, and said, being troubled by what the stewards had done: "At your hands let God require the ten hundred which you have made me lose, for I know certainly, that if you had given fifteen pounds of gold to that poor man, as I commanded you, this woman who has given me five hundred pounds would have given me fifteen hundred; and that you may be certain of this, I will have it said by herself." And he sent for her to come to him, and he asked her and said: "Tell me, I pray thee, was it in thy mind to give me only this, or more?" And she, trembling, thinking that he knew what she had done,

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took an oath and said: "I swear to thee, by St. Mennas, that I had written fifteen hundred in my letter to give thee; and an hour afterwards, being in the church, and opening the letter to see if it were right, I found that ten hundred had been erased, and yet I am certain that with my own hand I wrote fifteen hundred, and that I gave the letter to no one afterwards, for which cause I wondered and said: 'Perhaps it is not the will of God that I should give more.'" And after these words, as soon as that honourable lady was gone, the stewards of the patriarch, seeing themselves thus discovered, threw themselves at his feet and asked his forgiveness, promising that they would never more do anything which should not be according to his wishes.

Nicea Patritius, whom the emperor had made lord of Alexandria, hearing of the immense liberality of the patriarch, and how he distributed the treasures of the church to the poor, by the suggestion and counsel of certain wicked men, went to him and said: "Know, Lord Patriarch, that the empire is in great need; wherefore since thou spendest the treasure of the church without measure, I demand that thou shouldst give it for the expenses of the empire." And without anger, the patriarch answered with great gentleness and said: "It is not just, in my opinion, to give to an earthly king that which is offered to the heavenly; and if thou hast supposed that I would do so, know that of myself I will not give thee one piece of money, but if thou wilt take it by force, I cannot and will not prevent thee. Behold the treasures of the church are under the roof, do as it pleaseth thee." Then Nicea called certain of his servants and made them take away all the treasure, except a hundred pieces, which he left for the expenses of the patriarch. And as Nicea was descending from the palace of the patriarch with those who carried the money, there entered men with vases full of gold, which had been sent to the patriarch from Africa; and that it might not appear that it was gold, on the cover of each one was written: "Honey, the best of all honey, without smoke." Which inscription Nicea read, and knowing that the patriarch never

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was angry, or remembered any injury that was done him, sent a message to him that he should send him some of that honey, for he had need of it. And as the messenger, who brought the vases to the patriarch, told him how they were full of gold and not of honey, the patriarch thanked God; and he took one of those vases on which was written, "The finest honey," and sent it to Nicea, saying: "God, in the scripture, says to his servant: 'I will never leave thee or forsake thee;' know, therefore, that corruptible man can never ruin or bring to poverty God, who gives life and food to all." And he commanded his servants who carried the little vase that they should open it before Nicea, and tell him that all the vases he had seen were filled with gold, and not with honey.

It happened that the messengers of the patriarch found Nicea at the table; and finding that he received only one vase and having seen many, not thinking they were filled with gold, he said to the messengers: "Tell the patriarch that I see plainly he is angry with me, because if he were not angry, he would not have sent me so little honey."

But when the vase was opened, and he had read the letter of the patriarch, and knew that this and all the other vases were full of money, and that the patriarch had sent to tell him, among other things, that corruptible man cannot constrain or impoverish God, he was changed to a better mind, and being sorry, said: "Certainly Nicea Patritius will not constrain God, since it is true that I am but a corruptible sinner."

And immediately ceasing to eat, he rose from the table, with great penitence and fervour, and took all the pieces of money which he had taken from the patriarch, and those which he had sent in the vase, and three hundred of his own; and he went to him alone, and fell at his feet, with great humility, praying him to pardon him, and offering himself ready for any penance which he would give him. And the patriarch, wondering at the sudden change and repentance of Nicea, listened to him kindly, and forgave him freely without reproving him. For which cause Nicea

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and the patriarch became great friends, so that he made him his companion, and they always held each other in esteem.

Certain holy fathers have said, that it is an angelic thing never to be angry, but to live in perpetual tranquillity; but a human thing to be angry and immediately reconciled; and a diabolical thing to be angry, and to remain so all day, and not to make peace. This I have said to prove the perfection of the Patriarch John. On a certain occasion, when it happened that the above-named Nicea, wishing for the sake of gain to impose a tax on certain merchandise, and the patriarch not consenting on account of his compassion for the poor, who would have been burdened by it, they came to words with each other, and grew angry, and so parted; and these words were after the third hour.

Now the anger of the patriarch was very just, because it proceeded from charity, but that of Nicea was evil, because it proceeded from avarice; nevertheless, the most holy patriarch, considering that it does not become a perfect man to be angry, whether for justice or for any other cause, especially with such anger as his had been, as the hour of vespers drew near, he sent his priest to Nicea, to say thus: "Know, my lord, that the sun declines," wishing by these words to give him to understand that according to the doctrine of Christ he was not permitted to keep his anger till the sun had set. Nicea, understanding these words, and wondering at his unmeasured kindness which invited him so courteously to peace and concord, felt such compunction that, unable to restrain the ardor of his heart, he rose quickly with many tears and came to the patriarch, who received him with a benevolent countenance, saying: "Welcome be the son who has obeyed the commandment of the church," and embracing each other, they sat down. And the patriarch said: "Believe me, Patritius, if I had not seen thee so much discomposed and deceived, I would have come to thee and would not have been ashamed; for our Lord Jesus Christ went through the cities and villages, visiting men and women, however low and sinful they might be." And every one being much edified by the humility of the patri-

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arch, Nicea answered: "Believe me, father, that from this time forward I will give no audience to those evil men who persuade me to discord with thee by their evil counsel." The patriarch said: "Believe me, my son, if we will heed false reporters and evil counsellors, we shall fall into many and great dangers, because in these days there is little faith, and many speak with malice and hatred, and not with charity and justice; and greatly have I found myself deceived, through trusting in the counsel of certain persons. And having proved this several times, I resolved within myself not to believe any man lightly, and not to pronounce any sentence without a diligent examination of both sides; and I ordered that if those who accused any person should be found untruthful, they should suffer the same penalty which would have fallen on the accused, if his guilt had been proved; and from that time forth no one has been so bold as to bring anything false before me. Which rule I pray thee that thou wouldest also make, as otherwise thou wilt do much injustice." And after these words Patritius, humbly recommending himself to the patriarch, and promising to do as he had said, returned to his palace. It happened that one day a nephew of the patriarch, named Gregory, had a dispute with one who hired land of the patriarch, and who was indebted to him for a certain sum, and he received much abuse from him; and feeling much ashamed that he had been publicly insulted by one lower than himself, he returned to the patriarch very angry, and in tears; so that he could not explain the cause of his grief when the patriarch enquired it, and he began to tell the facts in course. Then those who had been present, when this abuse was addressed to him, in order to provoke the patriarch against his tenant, said that it was a great dishonour to him that his nephew should be abused by so low a person. The patriarch, like a good spiritual physician, seeking by mild words to heal his nephew's wound and provocation of heart, answered and said: "Then there has been one bold enough to open his mouth against thee and insult thee? Believe me, my son, that I will have such a revenge that

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all Alexandria will talk of it." And a little while afterwards, seeing him soothed and consoled by these words, expecting that severe justice should be done that tenant, he called him, and embracing him said: "My dearest nephew, if thou truly desirest to be my son, arm thyself with all patience, and prepare to receive injuries, as I am prepared; and then I shall have thee for my son indeed, for that is true relationship which is born not of flesh and blood, but of a similarity in virtue." And having said these words, he made them call his factor who was over the tenants, and ordered him to receive no rent, or taxes, or payment of any kind which might be due from the man who had addressed injurious language to his nephew for the houses or lands which he held from the patriarch. And men wondered much at his great benignity, and understood that this was his meaning when he said that he would take such a revenge that all Alexandria should talk of it; that is, he not only did not revenge himself, but he repaid good for evil.

At one time, having heard it said that a deacon, whose name was Damianus, bore malice against another priest, he commanded that when he came to the mass on Sunday he should be pointed out to him; which was done by the archdeacon who was at the altar. But the patriarch told no one what he would do; and the mass being ended, and Damianus coming with the others to receive the communion according to custom, he stayed his hand and took back the body of Christ to himself, and said: "Go first and make peace with thy brother, forgive him, according to the commandment of Christ, and then come and receive the sacrament worthily." And Damianus, being ashamed, and fearing to contradict the patriarch before all the multitude, and in such a holy place, promised faithfully to make peace as soon as he should be able.

Then the patriarch, having received this promise, gave him the holy body of Christ, and for this cause great fear entered into all the clergy and laity, so that from that time forth every one guarded himself against hating his neigh-

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bour, fearing lest he might, like Damianus, be put to confusion by the patriarch.

A certain man of Alexandria came to the patriarch and gave him eight pounds of gold, which was all that he had, and begged him that he would pray God for the safety of his son, who was his only child, who was about to sail for Africa in a ship laden with merchandise. The patriarch received the above-named sum of gold, wondering at the great magnanimity and devotion of that man, who offered so devoutly all that he possessed; therefore immediately before his departure he prayed over him; and when he was gone he assembled all the clergy of the church and made prayers for him and for his son, praying that God would send him back safe and well, with his ship. It happened that before thirty days had passed there came to the same man news that his son was dead; and on the third day after, his brother returned in the ship and told him how, having met with a storm, he had lost all his merchandise and that of his son, and nothing had escaped except the empty vessel and the men. Which words being heard by the father of the lad, who was also the owner of the ship, he fell into such grief and melancholy that he was near despair; and he would not and could not be consoled.

These things being told to the patriarch, he felt the greatest sorrow, principally for the death of the lad, for whose safety he had prayed, and on whose account he had received so large a charity: and not knowing what better to do, he gave himself earnestly to prayer, and implored the merciful God that in His pity He would console that devout and most afflicted man; for as for himself, he was ashamed to send for him and comfort him, seeing it did not appear that his prayers had helped him: nevertheless he sent to him, consoling him, and praying him not to despair nor give himself overmuch sorrow, knowing God permits nothing without just cause, and orders everything as it should be, although sometimes to us it may not seem so; and the patriarch persevering in his prayers for that afflicted man, fearing lest he should become desperate and lose his soul

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by his immoderate grief, as it pleased God the same man saw one night, in a vision, a man in the dress and appearance of the patriarch, who seemed to say: "Now why dost thou lament thyself and give thyself so much sorrow? Didst thou not entreat me that I would pray God that he would save thy son? Now know that he is safe, and believe me, that if he had lived, he would have become a most wicked and evil man, so that thou wouldst have had no comfort, and he would have made a bad end; and know also certainly, that if God had not revoked his sentence, for that gold which thou gavest me, and for the prayers which I made for thee, the ship would have gone down, and thou wouldst have lost that, and also thy brother; therefore rise up and thank God, who has saved thy child, and has withdrawn him from this vain world and placed him in true and eternal safety." And as the man returned to himself, his heart was wonderfully soothed and comforted, so that no bitterness remained in it; and thanking God, he came running to the patriarch, and knelt down and related the vision to him, praising God, who by his means had thus consoled him, which the patriarch hearing, he felt wonderful joy, and with great fervour, thanking God, he said: "Glory be to Thee, most merciful God, who condescendest to answer the prayers of sinners!" Then turning to the man, he said: "By no means, my son, think that this which has happened came from me, but from God, and thy faith, which was worthy to obtain this mercy."

And the humble John said this, not being willing to be reputed a saint; but that man, like a wise person, recognizing the grace of God as coming through his means, thanked him devoutly and departed.

As this most blessed man was going to visit the sick at a place called Cæsarea, where he had built them a hospital, he said to the Bishop Troilus who was with him, and who was very avaricious: "To-day, my brother, show love and honour to the poor brothers of Christ, and give them some charity." Which he said because it had been told him that the steward of the bishop had there with him full thirty

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pounds of gold belonging to the bishop, who intended to buy platters and other silver vessels for his table. Now the bishop, being somewhat moved by the presence both of the patriarch and of so many infirm persons, and feeling ashamed not to obey the words of the patriarch, commanded his steward to give a large piece of gold to each of those poor people, and there were so many that the thirty pounds of gold were soon distributed.

Then the patriarch and the bishop departed, and each returned to his house; and the bishop, thinking of the great charity which he had done, and how, to appear well, he had spent on the poor that which he had laid up to furnish his own table, felt such sadness and bitterness that by reason of the great pain he fell into a fever; and when the servant of the patriarch came, inviting him to dine, saying that the patriarch awaited him, he excused himself, saying that he could not go because he felt a little fever. The patriarch, hearing this, knew immediately the cause of his malady, and went to him, and with a smiling face said to him: "Thou thinkest, perhaps, that I said in earnest that thou shouldst give charity to those poor persons, but I spoke in jest and for amusement, because I myself would have given it, but my steward had no money with him; wherefore know that I received it as a loan from thee: behold, I here restore thee the thirty pounds of gold which thou hadst given to the poor." And the bishop, taking the gold, was immediately consoled; the fever departed, and warmth and strength began to return to him, so that the cause of his illness was plainly seen; and when the patriarch had given him the money, he asked to have it in writing that he renounced the merit of that charity and gave it to the patriarch; which paper the bishop gave willingly, and wrote with his own hand, thus: "My Lord God, give to my lord the Patriarch of Alexandria, I pray thee, the reward of thirty pounds of gold which I gave to the poor, because he has repaid it to me." And having received this writing, the patriarch departed, and led Troilus to dine with him. And the just and compassionate God, who gives retribution to the good and to the wicked,

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willing to reprove and punish the bishop for that which he had done, and to induce him to be charitable, showed him immediately after dinner this vision. It seemed to him, as he afterwards said, that he was caught up into heaven, and there he saw a beautiful palace, whose beauty exceeded all earthly splendour. The door was all of gold, and over it was written thus: "This is the mansion and eternal resting-place of the Bishop Troilus." And as he read that inscription with great delight, hoping he should rejoice in that palace, suddenly there came a servant of the king, holding in his hand many offerings, who said to his companions and attendants: "Erase this writing and title, which is over the door; change it, and write thus: 'Mansion and repose of the Patriarch John, bought for thirty pounds of gold from the Bishop Troilus.'" And so it pleased the just king, and it seemed to Troilus that the inscription was erased, and the other which said "John" was set in its place. Then he awoke and returned to himself, and knowing his loss, he humbly told the vision to the patriarch, and from that time forth he was always a liberal giver of charity.

God, who deprived Job of his riches, did the same to this, his dear friend, whose ships being in that place which is called Andria, there came so great a wind and tempest that to save the ships and the men they threw all the merchandise into the sea, which merchandise was of great value because the ships were laden with precious cloths, and with silver, and other costly things; and there were thirteen ships, each a thousand moggia in size. And as the masters and merchants to whom these things had been consigned returned to Alexandria, they fled hastily into the church, because it was not the custom to take debtors in the church, and they feared lest the patriarch should have them taken.

Which being heard by the patriarch, he sent them a letter in this form, written by his own hand: "My brothers, it is written in Job: 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.' And as it pleased God, so has it happened now. 'Blessed be the name of the Lord.' Come out, my children, and do not give yourselves uneasiness, and hope in God, who

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will take care of us in the time that is to come." This news being spread through the country, all the small and great of Alexandria came to visit and condole with him, but he, as if the loss had not been his, prevented them all, and spoke to them and said: "Brothers and children, be not amazed or distressed at this which has happened to me, nor yet have compassion on me; and be sure that this loss has come through my sin; and if I had not grown proud of the goods which God had lent me, he would not thus have punished me. Whence I believe that God, willing that I should know myself, has permitted this; since it is a certainty that almsgiving is a cause of pride to him who does not guard himself well, and that tribulation teaches man to know himself and to be humble. So the scripture says: 'Poverty humbleth a man.' I will say then with David the prophet: 'It is a good thing, my Lord, that thou hast humbled me, that I may know Thy grace and my deserts.' And I know certainly that I, by my pride, am the cause of two evils; which are that I, having vainglory, shall lose the merit of my almsgiving; and that for my sin so much money is lost, with which I should have been able to relieve so many poor, who now suffer want; so that the peril of all those who are in distress and misery returns justly on my head.

"Nevertheless, dearest brothers, I do not doubt the kindness of the glorious God, and I hope that not for my merits, but for the necessities of the poor, He will not abandon us; because He said in the gospel: 'Ask, and seek first the kingdom of God, and all these other temporal things, of which you have need, will be prepared for you.' And certainly there is the same God now that there was in the time of Job, to whom He multiplied that which he lost; and so I hope He will do to us." And with these and similar words he answered and comforted the citizens and lords who came to console him for his loss, so that they all departed much edified by his patience and humility.

And as it pleased God, not much time passed before He rendered it back to him, and made him gain twice as much as he had lost. For which thanking God, he became more

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munificent and large in the giving of charity. A friend and minister of his, being in great poverty, the patriarch, hearing it, and seeing that he was poor and ashamed, and that he would have no one know his need, gave him secretly, with his own hand, two pounds of gold. And the man thanking him much, and saying that it was such a great service that he should be always indebted, and should feel ashamed to look him in the face, he answered, encouraging him: "Go away, and do not say so; I have not yet shed my blood, nor laid down my life for thee, according as our Lord commanded."

There being once great want in that country, and a certain man being required by some, who were his creditors, to pay a great debt, and having nothing movable that he could sell, he went to a great baron of that land and prayed him that he would lend him fifty pounds of gold, saying that he would give him a pledge that should be worth much more, and the baron promised to serve him. And that man, waiting to receive the gold from the baron, and finding himself urged by his creditors so that he could no longer delay, went to the patriarch, and humbly told him his need, and prayed him to lend him a certain sum of money. The courteous patriarch, letting him first finish his speech, answered: "Son, I will lend thee as much as thou needest. I will also give thee the garment from my back, if thou desirest;" and he immediately lent him what he asked. And he was so pitiful that he could never see an afflicted person in tears that he did not also weep for compassion.

Now God, willing to show that great baron his negligence, made him see this vision. The following night, after the patriarch had lent that man what he wished, it seemed to him that he saw a priest at an altar, to whom were brought many offerings, and for every one which any one offered he received a hundred. And it appeared to him that he saw many offerings on a desk, and he also saw the patriarch, who stood behind him; and he seemed to hear a voice that said to him: "Go take that offering, and offer it at the altar, and receive a hundred for one." But he, being negligent and not going, the patriarch, who, as I said, was behind him,

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ran and took that offering and carried it to the altar, and received a hundred for one; and awaking, he could in no way understand the signification of his dream; and meanwhile, remembering the man to whom he had promised to lend fifty pounds of gold, he sent to him that he should come for it. And he coming and saying how the patriarch had taken from the baron both the trouble and the reward of that deed, and how he could wait no longer, because he was much molested by his creditors, and he had recourse to the patriarch and received from him that which he needed, the baron remembered his vision and said: "Truly didst thou say that the patriarch had taken away my reward, and so I saw in my vision; whence woe to them who would do good, but delay."

At one time, as the patriarch went to the church on the feast of the holy martyrs Cyrus and John, as he was going out of the city gate, a woman threw herself at his feet, saying: "Judge, oh father, and do justice for me against my son-in-law, who has done me such and such an injury." And as some who were in his company said to him: "Let her be now, father, for at thy return thou wilt have time to understand this affair," he answered: "And how will God hear our prayers, if I put off hearing this poor woman? Who is my security that I shall live till to-morrow? And if I should die, I should have to give an account of this." And he did not depart thence until justice was done to that woman. The patriarch, once understanding how the Prince of Alexandria lived in hatred against another, like an anxious bishop of the souls committed to him, sent quickly for him, and with many kind and persuasive words urged him to peace and concord; but as he was not willing to pardon the other, the patriarch dismissed him. And after some days he sent for him under pretext of wishing to speak with him about the affairs of the community, and when he was come he led him into the church and prepared himself to say mass, having no assistance except that of a clerk; and when he had elevated the host, he began to say the paternoster with the clerk and with the prince; and coming to that

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part which says "Forgive us our trespasses," he ceased and made a sign to the clerk that he should be silent, so that only the prince said: "As we forgive them that trespass against us." Then the patriarch turned to him gently and said: "Behold, consider what thou hast said, that may God forgive thee as thou forgivest." At which words the prince felt wonderful compunction, and so much sorrow and fervour that it seemed to him his heart was in a flame, and unable to endure it, he threw himself at the patriarch's feet and said humbly: "Behold, my lord, I am ready to do what thou commandest." And the mass being finished, he made peace with his enemy.

A proud man once coming to his knowledge, he did not reprove him in public, lest he should confuse or mortify him; but sitting with him and with other friends, he began to speak of humility, that by this method he might touch the proud man's heart and lead him to repentance. And he said, speaking as it were against himself: "Oh! how it makes me wonder, my lords and brothers, that my miserable soul does not seem to remember nor think of the humility of the Son of God; but I grow proud towards my brother and neighbour, thinking that I have more virtue and goodness, or more honour and prosperity than he, not remembering that sweetest doctrine of Christ, who says: 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls;' not thinking either of the miracles and examples of the saints, who reputed themselves of low esteem, and some called themselves dust and ashes, and others, worms and not men. And how Moses, when God appeared to him, said that he had an impediment in his speech, and excused himself, not wishing to be the ruler of the people. And when Esaias saw God, he said that he was of unclean lips. Now I, poor creature, what am I proud of? Am I not made of clay, like the bricks? Is not all my glory like the flower of the field that soon fades?" By these words, and by others like them, the most holy patriarch, speaking only against himself, persuaded his hearers to humility, they being well able to understand where his words applied.

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This most holy man kept always in mind, and would often relate, those terrible visions which were seen by a man who lived in that country which is called Cologne; of whom it was said that he saw in a vision the soul of a man pass from the body, and as it rose to heaven the demons of pride appeared before it and sought to know if any of their works were found in it; and then the spirits who tempt to detraction did the same; and so also did diverse choirs of demons, according to the different vices to which they are deputed to tempt men; and each searched if the soul had been guilty of any of those sins to which they entice men.

John, hearing of these things, fell into great thoughtfulness and fear of death, remembering also St. Hilarion, the hermit of Mount Carmel, who drawing near to death, feared and said to himself: "Oh my soul, thou hast served God eighty years, and dost thou fear to leave the body? Depart securely and go, for God is very merciful." And thinking of this, the patriarch said: "If the most holy Hilarion, who had served Christ eighty years, who had raised many dead, and wrought many miracles, feared in that bitter hour, what wilt thou do when those cruel accusers shall come against thee? What account wilt thou render to the spirit of lying, and to that of detraction, and the other vices?" And thus speaking, he lifted his eyes to God and said: "Pitiful Lord, restrain them and drive them away, because no human power can resist them. Give us, Lord, Thy holy angels for guides, that they may guard us and care for us in that trying moment; for bitter is the hate of our adversaries against us and many their deceits, and great are the perils of dwelling in and passing through the ocean of this world. And if we see that whoever has to pass from one land to another procures an escort and guides, and prays them to consider carefully that they do not stray, or fall among thieves, or savage beasts, nor into dangerous places, how much more should we pray to have guardians and wise guides able to help us in such a passage and journey as that from this world to the next?"

These are the words and continual meditations of the

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patriarch, with which he taught others. It being permitted by God, for the sins of the people, that Alexandria should be taken by them of Persia, the patriarch fled into his own country, which was Cyprus, into his city, which is called Anaconta, into which place he was followed by the above-named Nicea Patritius, who, also flying, went to the emperor; and he prayed him humbly that he would condescend to go with him to the emperor, that he might lay before him the state of the city of Alexandria. To which he graciously consented, and entered with him into a ship; and as they went, it happened that there arose so great a tempest that the vessel was near sinking; and as they were in this great storm, Nicea, together with his barons, one night saw the patriarch, who lifted his hands towards heaven, praying God that He would still that tempest; and it seemed to them that he was heard, and the tempest ceasing, as it pleased God, they came into harbour. And here the patriarch, not sleeping but waking, saw visibly an angel in human form, more resplendent than the sun, with a golden rod in his right hand, who said to him: "Come into that blessed city, in which the King of Kings awaits thee."

And being much rejoiced at this vision, he called Nicea Patritius, and said to him with many tears: "Thou, Master Patritius, didst call me to go to the earthly emperor; but know that the celestial messenger has come to me, who has summoned me to go to the Eternal Emperor;" and then he told him the vision in order. At which Nicea Patritius, being glad and sorry at the same time, having received his benediction, took leave of him, and permitted him to depart. And the patriarch, coming into his own city of Anaconta, made a will, thus: "I render thanks to Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou hast fulfilled the prayers of unworthy me, and hast given me grace to find that now, at the time of my death, I have but three purses of silver remaining to me. Thou knowest, Lord, that I found in Thy patriarchate, when I was appointed its head, eighty hundred pounds of gold; and Thou knowest also that all the other infinite treasure which afterwards came into my hands, as it was Thine, so

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for Thy love, I gave it to my lords and Thy poor servants: and so I desire and command that these three purses of silver shall be given to the poor."

O most holy soul! O great devotion! O faithful servant and steward! who did not, like many prelates, enrich his relatives with the goods of the church and lay up treasures in this life, not distributing them to the poor, whose they are; but he built monasteries and hospitals, and endowed the church, and assisted the poor. Wherefore God glorified him in life and in death, as He promised, saying: "I will glorify them who glorify me."

And at his death God wrought many miracles; the first of which was, that when they would bury his most holy body in a sepulchre, in which for a very long time two very holy bishops had been laid, as soon as the body was raised to place it between them, their bodies, as if they had been living, turned and gave him room and honour, which glorious miracle was seen, not by one, nor by a hundred, but by all the multitude which was collected to bury that most holy body.

On the same day that he passed from this life a most holy monk who lived in Alexandria, whose name was Savinius, being almost at the hour of his own death, saw in a vision the most holy patriarch; and it seemed to him that all the clergy came out of the bishop's mansion in procession, with lighted torches in their hands, and went to the emperor; and he thought that a maiden of the emperor's household called the patriarch to come near, and quickly there came a maiden more beautiful than the sun, with a crown on her head; and she gave him her hand, and welcomed him, and put on his head a crown of olive. Savinius, returning to himself and understanding the signification of the vision, knew that in that same hour the Patriarch John had passed from the body and had been received by God with honour, but that he might be more certain, he noted the day and the hour; and enquiring afterwards of those who came from Cyprus, he found that on that same day and hour the patriarch had passed from this life; and he knew that the maiden

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who appeared to him was Mercy, who, while he lived — as has been told above — appeared to him in a similar form and said to him: "If thou wilt have me for thy friend, I will lead thee into the presence of the Emperor;" whence they were all sure, that because he had taken to himself pity and mercy, that virtue had led him to God, the Eternal Emperor. Also a devout man of Alexandria saw that night in a vision a great multitude of poor persons, orphans, scholars, and widows, who carried olive branches in their hands, and they went in procession to the church, in honour of the patriarch.

The wonderful vision of Furseus, how he was raised above the body, and saw the glory of paradise. Written by Theophilus Sergius and Elchinus.

THERE was an admirable monk, whose name was Furseus, who led a holy life, and was noble by birth, but more so by sanctity. From the time of his childhood he showed signs of great wisdom and perfection, and was in favour with God and man; he was healthy and beautiful in body, devout of heart, gentle of speech, pleasant in discourse, adorned with all wisdom, grave, courteous, virtuous, and humble. Thus adorned with goodness, he left his country, where he had during many years studied theology, and with certain devout companions entered a monastery to do penance; and desiring to induce some of his family to embrace the same life, he left the monastery and returned to his own country, to preach and visit his kindred; and having arrived near his father's house, he was attacked by a severe illness, so that he was obliged to be carried to the house; and at midnight on the following Tuesday, while many friends were standing around him, feeling his feet grow cold, he joined his hands in prayer and disposed himself as if to sleep, thinking the hour of his departure was at hand.

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And he heard a great and terrible voice, like that of a great multitude, which called him; at which he opened his eyes and saw three angels, two of them in human form, but their splendour was such that they appeared all of light, and the third angel was armed with a white shield and a very splendid sword, which he carried before him; and their great splendour and the melody of their voices filled him with wonderful joy. And one of them, singing, began that verse of the psalm, "They shall go from strength to strength, till every one of them appeareth before God in Zion." After this he seemed to hear the songs of thousands of angels, but he did not understand them, and they appeared to go towards Christ, in wonderful light; so that he could not discern them for the great splendour of their faces. And as the angels led him, one on each side, and the armed one before him, the angel who was on his right hand said to him: "Fear not; thou hast those with thee who will defend thee from thine enemies." And he heard a great howling of demons, and as he passed one of them cried and said to the others: "Let us pass before and close the way and give him battle;" and at that, fearing greatly, he saw on the left hand a very dark cloud and many frightful demons, with black bodies and long necks, lean and terrible. Their heads appeared like great and horrible black caldrons; and when they flew through the air and fought with the angels, he could not discern any distinct bodily form, but he saw dreadful flying shadows; and he could not look on their faces, they were so dark and terrible, as he could not see those of the angels for their great splendour. When these demons fought, they threw fiery arrows; but the armed angel received them all on his shield, and the good angels, fighting against the evil ones, overcame them and conquered them, saying: "Hinder us not, for this man has no share in your condemnation." On the other hand, the adversaries blasphemed, saying that God could not be just if the man who had sinned should escape condemnation; for it is written, that not only he who commits sin, but he who consents to it in his heart is worthy of death. The

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angels defended him, and so great were the cries and the resistance of the demons that it appeared to Furseus that these cries must be heard through all the world. The demons, seeing themselves conquered in the first battle, raised their venomous heads again, saying: "This man has spoken many idle words, so that it is not fitting that he should pass, without suffering, to the blessed life." The angel answered and said: "If you can accuse him of no greater sins, it is not just that he should be lost for this." The demon said: "It is written: 'If you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.'" The angel replied: "Where dost thou find that this man has revenged himself, or has done any injury to any one?" The devil said: "It is not written, 'If thou dost not revenge thyself, but if thou dost not forgive from thy heart.'" The angel replied: "God alone sees the heart, therefore this must be referred to his just judgment." Then the enemy made a third attack and said: "The scripture says, 'Unless you are converted and become like little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven;' now this he has not done." The angel, excusing Furseus, replied: "He had the purity and perfection of children in his heart, though indeed the bad customs of the world sometimes disturbed it, and it had contracted some rust; still he committed no sin worthy of eternal damnation." The demon said: "As through bad customs he has committed sins, he ought to bear the penalty;" but the good angel calling on God, the demon remained discomfited. After these things Furseus, being raised in the air, looked towards the world, and it appeared like a cloudy valley; and he saw in the air four fires, a little apart from each other, and the angel said: "These are the four fires which burn all the world. The first is the fire of falsehood, for those who have broken the compact and covenant made at baptism, and have not kept their promise to renounce the devil and his pomps. The second is the fire of cupidity and avarice, especially for those who have not renounced the world and made a Christian profession. The third is the fire of anger and discord, which

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is born of covetousness. The fourth is of cruelty, by which the poor and sick are robbed without mercy, and from this proceed detraction and other vices." After these words these four fires united themselves together and approached Furseus, who cried out with fear, and said to the angel: "Help me, for the fire approaches me." The angel replied: "Fear not, that which thou hast not kindled will not burn thee; that which appears to thee so great and terrible nevertheless has this condition, that it burns only those who kindle it by their vices, and each of them according to his deserts." Then the armed angel passed through the fire and divided the flame, and it became like a wall on either side, and the other two angels accompanied Furseus and defended him from the fire, and as he went on he saw the demons flying before to make ready for a hard battle and to prevent his passage; and one of them said: "Still, it remains for him to pass the narrow door, by which few enter; here at least we shall conquer, and it is this commandment which says, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'" To this the angel replied and said: "This man has always done good to his neighbour, and good works are the signs and fruit of love within, wherefore it is written, that God will render to every man according to his works." The evil angel insisting that he had not fulfilled the command of love to his neighbour, and the good angel saying that he had, there was a great battle, until the just God gave sentence against the adversaries. Then the good angels remained conquerors over the demons; and Furseus was comforted and felt a wonderful gladness, and all labour and sorrow appeared small, thinking he had gained eternal glory. Then Furseus beheld around him many squadrons of resplendent angels and saints, who, flying towards him, drove away the demons and delivered him from the fear of the fire; and among the other saints he saw and knew the holy fathers of that country, who approached him familiarly and told him their names; one of them was called Elcanus, and the other Meldanus, and they spoke with him; and there was great peace in heaven. And a great multitude of angels, in

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four distinct choirs, sang: "Holy, Holy, Holy: Lord God of Sabaoth;" and his soul was rapt in glory and joy by the sweetness of that song. And the angel who stood on his right hand asked him: "Dost thou know whence comes this gladness?" And he replying "No," the angel said: "This joy is the portion of the blessed continually in heaven, where we now are." And wondering, he said to the angel: "It is great happiness to hear these songs;" and the angel answered: "In this celestial kingdom there is no sorrow, except for the perdition of men." And he saw the holy priests before named, Elcanus and Meldanus, in splendour like the angels, come to him; and they commanded him that he should return to the body; and he being very sorrowful, they said to him: "Why dost thou fear the sorrow which will last but a short time; if thou lookest to the eternal reward, go securely and preach to all men that the judgment and vengeance of God upon the world draweth nigh." And Furseus said: "And also the end of the world;" and they said it might be so, but of this they were not certain; and Meldanus said: "My son, commend thyself to God and order thy life according to His commands; forsake evil, be a faithful steward, patient when goods are taken from thee, temperate when they are offered thee; for he who is the same when he gives or when he receives is worthy to make the dumb speak. Do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. Have no cares for worldly goods, neither for thy kindred; pray for thine enemies, return good for evil, for he who does this merits to control savage beasts, and no sacrifice is more acceptable to God than to forgive injuries; despise prosperity and be patient in adversity, for the enemies of the soul are two — the world and the devil; and one assists the other to destroy the soul." And these words being finished, Furseus was carried to his own house by the angels and laid on his bed; and they warned him to look well to himself while he lived, as they would soon return for him and receive him to the glory of the blessed.

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Vision of the Abbot Ciriaco, who could not have an audience of our Lady while having a book of Nestorius in his possession. From the Spiritual Field, written by Giovanni Evarato.

THE Abbot Ciriaco saw once in a dream a lady of a noble countenance, dressed in purple, and with her two men of venerable appearance, and he knew the lady to be the mother of our Lord, and the men to be St. John the Evangelist and St. John the Baptist. And he came out and prayed them to enter in his cell; but they would not consent to do so, and he continued entreating them, begging that they would not refuse the request of the humble; until the lady, seeing that he wearied himself with such petitions, answered him, saying: "You have an enemy of mine in your cell, and how can you ask me to enter it?" And after these words she disappeared. And the abbot waked up in great distress and tried to remember if he had sinned against her by the thoughts of his heart, because no one was in his cell but himself alone; and he meditated some time on this matter, but he could not discover that in thought or deed he had offended her; and finding himself very melancholy, he took up a book to read, hoping to drive away his sad thoughts; and the book was one which had been lent to him by the blessed Hezekiah, priest of the church at Jerusalem; and in turning over the leaves, he found at the end of the book two chapters, written by the impious Nestorius; and he knew at once that this was the enemy of our blessed Lady. And he went immediately and gave back the book to the owner and said to him: "Take your book, my brother, for it has brought me more harm than good;" and on his enquiring the reason of his saying this, he related to him all that had happened, and burning with zeal for God, he threw those two chapters into the fire, saying: "My cell shall never be the abiding-place of the enemy of our blessed Lady, the mother of our Lord."

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Of the Abbot Leontius, and how he bestowed charity, not giving it with his own hand. Written by Giovanni Evarato.

IT is said of the Abbot Leontius of Cicilia that he had never left the church for forty years, that he was fervent in piety, grave in speech, and did penance continually. It is also said of him that when the poor came to ask charity, if they were blind, he would give them money with his own hand; but if they could see, he would place it before them, either on the base of a column or on a bench, or on the steps of the church, where they would find it. Being once asked by an old man, "Why do you not give charity, oh father, with your own hand?" he replied: "Pardon me, it is not I that give it, but the Lord, who provides for both them and me."

The fight of faith. Written by Giovanni Evarato.

ST. ANTHONY, before he devoted himself to the life of a hermit, was once rapt in an ecstasy; and he saw a man whose beauty was more than the splendour of the sun, and he took his hand and said: "Come, for you must purify yourself and fight." And he led him into a theatre of immense size, and he saw that it was full of men, some clothed in black and some in white; and passing in among them, he saw a man of wonderful height, black as an Ethiopian, whose head reached the clouds, and of hideous aspect; and the youth who had first appeared to him told him that he was to fight with him; and he was terrified at the sight of this giant, and began to tremble, and his heart to palpitate with fear; and he asked pity of that celestial youth who had led him into the theatre, saying: "How can a mortal man, encompassed with infirmity, stand in battle

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against such a one as this? For if all the men in the world should unite, they could not resist him."

But that shining youth said to him: "At all events, it belongs to you to enter into combat with him. Do so then cheerfully, with courage and faith, for as soon as you have assaulted him I will be with you, and I will aid you and give you the crown of victory." And so, as soon as he had undertaken the battle and they began to fight, immediately that youth who had urged him to the combat gave him the victory; and the crowd of those men, black like Ethiopians, vanished with shrieks and howls, and the others, who were clothed in white raiment, rendered thanks and praises to Him who had helped him and given him the victory.

How in a certain monastery the grain sprouted because the usual charity was diminished. Written by Giovanni Evarato.

IT was the custom on the day of the holy supper of the Lord that all the poor and scholars of that neighbourhood should assemble at a certain monastery, and that each one should receive half a measure of wheat, thirteen loaves, a flask of wine, and the half of a flask of honey; but for three years grain had become very dear, so much so that twelve measures were worth a piece of gold.

And the monks, being together on the day of the fast of Ash-Wednesday, some of them told the abbot, their father, they did not think best to give the wheat as usual, since, as there was so little to be had, there might be a deficiency of it for the monastery; but the abbot said: "Let us not omit, my children, to do the charity established by our fathers, and which was instituted by the blessed Theodosius;" but the monks, remaining of the same mind, and declaring that to them it appeared to be impossible to give it, he at last consented, reluctantly, that they should do as seemed good to them. In consequence of this decision the

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usual charity was not given on the Thursday before the supper of our blessed Lord; and on Good Friday the brother who had charge of it opened the granary and found that all the wheat had sprouted, so they were obliged to throw it into the sea; seeing which thing, the abbot said to the friars: "Let those who make light of the commands of their fathers bear this in mind, — that such are the fruits of disobedience. If we had given these five hundred measures in charity, as our Father Theodosius commanded, by our obedience we should have assisted our poor brothers, but now we have lost the five hundred measures, and what have we gained? What evil have we brought upon ourselves! We have committed two sins: one, that we have disobeyed the command of our father; the other, that we have put our trust, not in God, but in our granary.

"At least let us learn by this experiment that God is He who disposes all earthly affairs, and what tender care He has for His children."

How the Abbot Erasmus cured a lion, and other wonderful things. Written by Giovanni Evarato.

AT a mile's distance from the Jordan is a monastery, called that of the Abbot Erasmus; and when we came to this monastery, the friars who lived there told us of the Abbot Erasmus, who, walking one day on the bank of the Jordan, met a lion who was roaring loudly and holding up one foot, in which there was a splinter of reed, so that the foot was swollen and much inflamed. As soon as the lion saw the abbot, he showed him the wounded foot with the piece of reed in it, as if he were begging him to cure it; and when the abbot saw the lion in this distress, he sat down, and took the paw, and opened the festered wound, and drew out the reed, and washed the sore carefully, and tying it up with a piece of linen, left him. But the lion, finding himself cured, did not wish to abandon the

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abbot, but like a dear disciple, wherever his master went he followed him; so that the abbot marvelled at so much gratitude, and from that time fed him and took care of him. These monks kept a donkey, to bring water from the Jordan for the use of the brothers, and they adopted the custom of committing him to the care of the lion, so that when he went to the bank of the river to feed, the lion should go with him and guard him; but one day when the donkey was feeding, the lion lingered a little behind him, and a camel-driver, going into Arabia, found the donkey and took him and carried him away.

The lion, having lost the donkey, returned sadly to his master at the monastery, with his head drooping; and Erasmus, thinking the lion had eaten the donkey, said to him: "Where is the donkey?" But he, like a human being, remained silent, looking on the ground; and the abbot said: "You have eaten him, and with the blessing of God, the work that he did that shall you do;" and so, from that day, by the command of the abbot, the lion brought every day a barrel of water that held four measures, for the use of the monastery; until one day, a cavalier, coming to the abbot for his blessing, saw the lion bringing the water, and asking the reason, took pity on him, and gave three pieces of gold to the fathers of the monastery that they might buy another donkey for their service, and delivered the lion from this burthen. A short time after the lion had been freed from this labour, the camel-driver who had taken the donkey came with a load of wheat to sell in the holy city, having the donkey with him. And it chanced that he met the lion, and he fled at the sight of him; but the lion knew the donkey, and ran to him, and taking his bridle in his mouth, according to his old custom, and to the great satisfaction of them both, roaring as if to say he had found the lost donkey, he brought him, together with three camels, to the abbot, who then understood that the lion had not eaten the donkey, but that he had been stolen from him; and in memorial of these things he gave the lion the name of Jordan. This lion remained in the monastery with the

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friars more than fifty years, never leaving the Abbot Erasmus, who passed to the Lord and was buried by the brethren when, by the will of God, the lion was not in the monastery. But after a little time he returned and sought for his father, and the Abbot Sabatius of Cilicia, who had been the disciple of the Abbot Erasmus, saw the lion, and said to him: "Jordan, your father has passed to the Lord, and has left you an orphan; but take and eat." The lion, however, would not eat, but all the time wandered round the monastery, looking here and there, seeking his father, signifying by his great roaring that he could not support his absence; but the Abbot Sabatius and the other fathers, patting his head, said to him: "The abbot has passed away, and has left us." But these words could not assuage his sorrow, and the more they sought to console him, so much the more he grieved, showing in his face and his eyes the sadness he felt at not seeing his father. And the Abbot Sabatius said to him: "Come with me, since you do not believe me, and I will show you where our father is laid." And he took him and conducted him to the spot where they had buried him, which was about the distance of five hundred paces from the church; and standing by the grave, he said to the lion: "Behold, here is our father buried." And he kneeled down beside the monument of the abbot, and when the lion had heard this, and had seen him kneeling in tears, he threw himself down, beating his head violently upon the ground, roaring; and immediately died upon the grave.

But all this was done — not indeed that it is to be believed that the lion had a soul — but because God sees fit to honour those who honour Him, not only in this life, but even after death; and also to show us in what a state of subjection the animals were to the first man, before he had been disobedient to the divine command, and had been driven from paradise.

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The Abbot Isaac and the spirit of anger. Written by Giovanni Evarato.

IN a mountain about six miles distant from the city of the Thebaid many monks live in caves, and some others in cells; and among them the Abbot Isaac, who related to us that he had laboured for a long time to make a mosquito net in the form of a tent, to protect himself from the mosquitos, but that he made some mistake in it, and it troubled him that he could not discover or amend the mistake. All one day he tried to do so in vain, not knowing what he ought to do; and at last, when he was in despair, a youth passed in through the window, who said to him: "You have made a mistake in the work; give it to me, and I will set it right;" but the abbot said to him: "Leave this place; may God guard me from thee." And he said once more: "It is unfortunate if you do not know how to labour;" to which the abbot answered: "Do not concern yourself on that account." "But," said the youth, "I speak from pity to you, for I see that your labour is lost;" but the abbot replied: "You are but little welcome, and also he who has conducted you here." "It is you who have conducted me here, and you are mine," said the demon. He asked: "Why so?" "Because," he continued, "you have taken the sacrament three Sundays, while you are the enemy of your neighbour." "It is false," said the abbot. "No," he answered, "it is not false, because you were angry with him by reason of the broken vase of oil; and I am the spirit of anger and of the remembrance of injuries, and therefore you are mine." And as soon as he had heard these things, he went from his cell to that of the friar his neighbour, and threw himself at his feet, and begged his forgiveness, and they made peace together; but on his return he found that the demon had destroyed the mosquito net and the mat on which he knelt when he prayed.

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Of a thief who came to the Abbot Fosimus and prayed him to make him a monk. Written by Giovanni Evarato.

THE Abbot Sabatius who dwelt in the monastery of the Abbot Fermo, relates that a robber once came to the Abbot Fosimus of Cilicia and prayed him, for God's sake, to do him the charity to make him a monk, that he might rest from his troubles, because he had killed many people; and the abbot exhorted him, and made him a monk, and gave him the habit of the order; but after some little time the abbot said to him: "My son, you cannot remain here, because if it should come to the ears of the prince, you would be taken and put in prison, and also your enemies may kill you; but I will conduct you to a monastery remote from these parts." And he took him to the monastery of the Abbot Dorotheus, near Gaza, where he remained nine years, and learned all the psalms and the monastical observances; but at the end of this time, he came again to the abbot at the monastery of Fermo, and said to him: "Have pity upon me, and give me my secular dress, and take this of the monastery." But the abbot, feeling sorry, said: "For what cause, my son?" And he answered: "This is the cause. I have, as you know, now been nine years in the monastery; and when I have been able I have fasted, and I have lived in purity and quietness, and with the fear of God always in my heart; and I know that His infinite mercy has pardoned many of my sins: but notwithstanding all this, I always see standing before me a little child, who says, "Why did you kill me?" I see him in my dreams, and in the church when I go to the communion, and in the refectory, always saying to me these same words, so that I cannot rest a single hour; for this reason, my father, I wish to depart, in order that I may die on account of this child, because I killed the little creature wantonly, and without

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any reason." And he took his former dress and put it on, and went to the city of Diosopolis, and was taken prisoner, and on the next day was put to death.

Of the faith which a lady kept to her husband. Written by Giovanni Evarato.

WHEN we came into Askelon, to the hospital of the monks, the Abbot Eusebius related to us these things. There was a master of a ship, who was a merchant and had lost everything, and his ship was wrecked, and the sailors perished, and he himself narrowly escaped with his life; and on his return home he was taken by his creditors and put in prison, and all that he had in his house was taken from him, even to the clothes of his wife, who with much sadness and anxiety deliberated how in such poverty she could even find bread for her husband; and being with him one day in the prison, and eating with him, there came in a nobleman of that place to give charity to the prisoners; and seeing the wife seated near her husband, he fell in love with her, for she was very beautiful, and he sent by the jailer to desire her to come to him; and she came willingly, thinking to receive charity for the love of God. And he spoke to her aside, and proposed to her to come and live with him, promising her much money; but she would not consent to do so, notwithstanding their extreme need. And in the same prison was a robber, who had also killed a man, and who was condemned to death in consequence; and by chance he heard this conversation between the rich man and the wife of the merchant, and he desired to have the benefit of the prayers of this holy woman, and he said to her: "I am a repentant man, and I have considered your honest conversation; and if you dig in such a place in the city, you will find much gold, which take and pay the debts of your husband, and there will then remain something to give in charity, and pray God for me that even I may find mercy."

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And soon after, the prefect entered into that city, and he commanded that the robber should be taken from the prison and put to death; and the next day the lady said to her husband: "If it please you, my lord, I will go to the place mentioned by the robber, if by chance those things which he said may be true;" and he answered her: "Do your pleasure." And she took a little bag and went in the evening to the place, and digging there, she found a hundred pieces of gold, carefully covered up, and she took them and went away. But she used prudent counsel and paid the debts to the creditors little by little, so that they might suppose that the money was lent them by their friends, until all the debts were paid and her husband liberated from prison. And he who related these things to us, said: "Behold, because these people kept the commandment of our Saviour Jesus Christ, He has shown His compassion to them."

Of the Abbot Gregory, the anchorite. Written by Giovanni Evarato.

THE Abbot Gregory, the anchorite, thus said: "As I was going to Byzantium, I took passage in a ship, and there were on board the same ship a scribe and his wife, who were going to the holy city to pray. And the captain of the ship was very religious and fasted often; but the water fell short, and when we had reached the middle of the sea the water failed until we were in great distress. It was a miserable sight to see the women, the children, and the servants feverish with thirst and lying half dead. And having been three days in this suffering, the scribe could not support such distress; and he drew his knife, intending to kill the sailors and the captain, saying, 'These have caused our death. Why did they not take sufficient water?' But I entreated him, saying, 'I beg you not to do this, but rather let us pray to our Lord Jesus Christ, the true God, who doeth great things and miracles

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without number; for this is the third day that the master of the ship has spent in prayer and fasting.' And the scribe, having consented to this, the fourth day, about the hour of noon, the captain of the ship stood up, and cried out with a loud voice: 'Glory be to Thee, Christ our Lord,' so that we all wondered to hear him; and he ordered the sailors to prepare all the water jars, and they, having done so, a cloud came over the ship, and so much rain fell that it filled them all. This was a great and wonderful miracle, for while the vessel sailed the cloud appeared to follow it, and it rained but little except near the ship."

Of the Abbot Alexander, who had grown old in a cave near the Jordan. Written by Giovanni Evarato.

NEAR Bethlehem there is a monastery of St. George, and the Abbot Eugenius was the father of this monastery, who was afterwards made Bishop of Hieropolis in Egypt. While we were with him, he told us of the Abbot Alexander, who had lived to extreme old age in a cave near the Jordan, and who was received in the monastery towards the close of his life; and for three months he could not rise from his bed, but ten days before he passed to the Lord, he was attacked by the demon, and the old man said to the demon: "Hast thou come at the going down of the sun, miserable coward that thou art? This is not a great deed, now that I am on my bed and cannot move. Thou hast but shown thy weakness, for if thou hadst been strong and valiant, thou wouldst have approached me fifty or sixty years ago, that with the help of Christ, who is my strength, I might have shown thy weakness, and despising thy roaring, have broken thy proud and stiff neck. But now my infirmities, and not my weakness, prevent me. Nevertheless, I give thanks to God, to whom I go, and to whom I will tell the injuries I have suffered from thee, and how, after the labours and fatigues of so many years, thou

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hast assaulted me thus atrociously, at the hour of my departure." Saying these and similar words, on the tenth day, with all tranquillity, he rendered his spirit to the Lord Jesus Christ in peace, and the holy angels were present.

Of an usurer who became a spiritual usurer. Written by Giovanni Evarato.

IN the city of Nisile lived a Christian lady who had a kind husband; and they were poor; but notwithstanding, they had fifty pieces of money. One day the husband said to his wife: "Let us give this money to some usurer, that we may have some interest from it, which we lose by keeping it." But this good wife said in reply: "If it be your will to lend it, let us give it as a loan to the God of the Christians." The husband said: "Where is this God that I may lend it to him?" And she answered: "I will show you where He is, and if you lend to Him, not only will it not be lost, but He will pay you the interest, and afterwards restore you the capital;" which having heard, the husband said: "Show Him to me, and I will give it to Him." And she led him to the holy church, which has five great doors; and having brought him into the portico of the church, she showed him the poor, saying: "If you give it to these, the God of the Christians will receive it, for these are all His." And he immediately, with cheerfulness, began to distribute the money to the poor; and having given it all, they returned to their house. But in consequence of this, after three months they began to be in want, and the husband said to his wife: "My sister, it appears to me that now the God of the Christians must give to us, for we are threatened with poverty." And the lady replied: "He will certainly give. Go to the place where you distributed the money, and He will restore you that and much more besides;" which having heard, he hastened to the holy church, and came to the porch where he had given the money to the poor, seeking all around if he could find some one to restore him the money; but he

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saw no one except the poor who were seated there. And thinking how he should find some one from whom he might ask it, he saw lying before him at his feet, upon the marble pavement, a piece of money; and he stooped down and picked it up, and took it home, and said to his wife: "See, I have been to the church, and I have seen the God of the Christians, as you promised, and He has given me nothing but this piece of money, which I found in the same place where I gave to the poor." And this admirable wife answered: "It is He who has invisibly given you this, for He, by the power of His unseen hand, directs this world; but go, my lord, and buy something that we may eat to-day, and in time to come He will provide for us."

And he went and bought wine and bread and a fish; and he brought them to his house, and gave them to his wife, who took the fish and cut it open, and found inside of it a very wonderful stone; so that she was astonished by its beauty, though she did not know what stone it might be; and she laid it carefully aside, and showed it to her husband when he came home, saying, "Behold, I have found this gem in the fish." And when he saw it, he was also struck with its beauty, though it was a strange stone to him; and when he had eaten he said to his wife: "Give me the stone, that I may go and sell it, if by chance it may be worth something." And he took the gem and went to a jeweller, whose business it was to buy and sell such merchandise; and he found that he had already closed his shop, and was going home because it was near sunset; and he said to him: "Will you buy this stone?" And the jeweller, looking at the gem, asked his price for it; but he answered him: "Give me what you please." And he offered him for it five pieces of money. But thinking that the jeweller was laughing at him, he said to him: "How much will you really give for it?" And the purchaser, also thinking the other spoke in jest, said: "Will you take ten pieces of money?" And the seller, still believing himself laughed at, made him no answer. Then the lapidary said: "Will you sell it for twenty pieces?" But he remained silent. The jeweller having

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offered thirty, forty, and fifty pieces for it, he began to estimate the stone more highly; and the purchaser, going up, little by little, at last offered him three hundred pieces of money; and the seller gave him the gem and took the money, and went joyfully to his wife, who, seeing him so cheerful, said: "For how much did you sell it?" thinking the price would be five or ten small coins; and he gave her the three hundred pieces, saying, "I have sold it for so much." And his wife, admiring the great mercy of divine goodness, said to him: "Behold, how good, how gracious, and how rich is the God of the Christians! He has not only returned the fifty pieces you lent to Him, but in a few days He has sent you so much. Know then, that in heaven or in earth, there is no God but He alone." But her husband, admonished by this miracle, having learned the truth by this experience, immediately became a Christian, and glorified the Lord our Saviour Jesus Christ, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, giving many thanks to his prudent wife, from whom he had learned the true knowledge of God.

The golden cross. Written by Giovanni Evarato.

SOME of the holy fathers relate that an ingenious youth went to a goldsmith to learn his art, and while he was diligently studying with him, one of the citizens of that city employed the goldsmith to make a cross of gold adorned with precious stones, intending to offer it to the church; and because the youth was very skilful, the master entrusted this work to him. Then this youth began to think to himself: "If this citizen offers so much money to Christ, why can I not make an offering of my labour on this cross; for Christ may regard it as the widow's two mites." And thinking how much his work on it would be worth, he lent that amount to the Lord, and put it also in the cross. When the cavalier who had ordered the cross came to see it, before the jewels were placed in it, he had it weighed, and found that it weighed much more than he had ordered; and he began to threaten

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the youth, thinking he had been fraudulent and had adulterated the gold.

Then the youth said to him: "He who alone searches the heart knows that I have not done this thing, but seeing you offer so much money to Christ our Lord, I thought to give my labour, that I might have a part with you." And he said to the youth: "Did you think this?" and he replied: "These were my thoughts." And the citizen said: "Since this was your intention, and you have offered willingly what you could to Christ, seeking to have a part with me, behold, from this day I receive you as my son." And he took him home with him, and made him his heir.

Of a secular man who was very noble and charitable. Written by Giovanni Evarato.

I WENT once to Constantinople, and being in the church, a most noble and faithful gentleman entered the church also. He, when he had seen me, accosted me, saluting me with every mark of respect; and having done so, he seated himself by my side, and began to ask me of those things which belong to the health of the soul. And it chanced that I said: "To those who rightly dispose of earthly things, celestial things are given." "Thou speakest well, father," he replied; "for truly he is blessed who rests his hopes on God, and commits himself entirely to Him." And he said: "I was the son of a secular man of illustrious fame, especially charitable, and he distributed many goods to the poor. One day he called me and showed me his money, saying, "Which is most agreeable to thee, my son: that I leave thee this wealth, or that I leave thee Christ for thy provider?' I, being pleased with what he did, answered that I would sooner choose Christ; because all these temporal riches will pass away to-day, and to-morrow be no more, but Christ will endure for ever. Which thing having heard, he distributed to the poor liberally, and with a large hand, so that, dying, he left me very little; but I, already

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become poor, went humbly, having my hope in Christ, to whom he had recommended me. And there was another very rich man, one of the principal men of the city, who had a wife faithful to Christ, and he himself feared the Lord; they had also an only daughter. And the wife said to her husband: 'We have only this child, and God has given us so many goods that she needs no more, and why should we seek to give her to some rich man, among the nobles of this country, who not being of good customs, will always afflict her? Let us seek for her a humble husband, who fears the Lord, who will love her, and care for her according to God's word.' The husband said: 'Thou hast spoken wisely. Go then into the church, and pray most earnestly, and there wait, and the first who enters will be the husband whom the Lord has sent us.' So she did as her husband had commanded, and having prayed, and sitting waiting, I entered first of all. Then she sent a servant immediately to call me to her, and began to ask me, saying: 'Whence art thou?' and I answered her: 'Of this city, and I am the son of such a man.' And she said: 'Of that giver of charity?' and I replied: 'Yes, I am his son.' And she said: 'Hast thou a wife?' I said: 'No;' and I told her what my father had said to me, and how I had answered. But she, praising the Lord, said: 'Behold! Thy good provider has sent thee a wife, and riches, that thou mayest possess the one and the other, with the fear of God.' And she gave me her daughter and the money; and I prayed God that until my death I might walk in the way of my father."

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BOOK II

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SELECTIONS FROM

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

AND BEATI OF TUSCANY

Most renowned until
this present time

COLLECTED, AND IN PART
WRITTEN OR TRANSLATED, BY
THE PADRE ABATE
DON SILVANO RAZZI
CAMALDOLENSI

A new edition

IN FLORENCE
AT THE PRESS OF
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1627

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The life of the Beato Torello da Poppi of the Casentino. Written by Messer Torello of that place, Canonico of Fiesole. Translated from the Latin and abridged by Don Silvano.

IN that time in which the portion of Tuscany called Casentino was not yet subject to the Florentines, but was ruled by its own counts, in the lands of Poppi, an important place in that valley through which runs the river Arno, and not far from its source, a son was born to a certain good man named Paolo, to whom he gave the name of Torello, and whom, when of a suitable age, he not only taught to fear God, and to lead a Christian life, but sent to school, that he might learn the first principles of letters — which he soon did — and to avoid evil companions and imitate the good. The young Torello, being accustomed to this life, and his father dying, for some time proceeded from good to better.

But that not pleasing our common enemy, who always goes about seeking whom he may devour, he so tempted Torello — God permitting it, for future and greater good — that he abandoned a virtuous life, and gave himself to the pursuit of the pleasures of the world; so that instead of being praised for his blameless and religious life, he was censured by all, and had become the very opposite of what he had at first been.

But the blessed Lord — who had never abandoned him, though He had left him to wander, in order to permit him to become a true mirror of penitence — called him to himself in this manner; as he was one day wandering and seeking amusement with his idle companions, a cock that was on a perch outside a window suddenly fell, and alighted on his shoulder, and crowed three times, and then flew back to the perch. Torello, calling to mind how the Apostle Peter had in a similar manner been made to see his guilt, awaked from his sleep of vice and sin in a state of wonder and fear;

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and thinking that this could have happened only by divine Providence, and to show him that he was in the power of the devil, left his companions instantly, and in penitence and tears sought the Abbot of Poppi, of the order of Vallombrosa; and commending himself to his prayers, threw himself at his feet, humbly begging for the robe of a mendicant friar, since he desired to serve God in the humblest manner. The abbot wondered much, knowing by common report Torello to be a youth of most incorrect life, to see him thus kneeling in contrition before him, and endeavoured, together with the monks, to persuade him to take their habit of St. John Gualberto. But at last, seeing he had no heart for it, and remained constant to his first request, he at last granted it; and he became a poor brother, and almost a desert hermit: for having received the benediction of the abbot, without communicating with either his family or friends, he left that country and took his way toward the most desert and savage places of the mountains, wandering among them for eight days, and passing the night wherever it chanced to overtake him. But having at last come to a great rock, near a place called Avellanato, he remained there, adopting it for a cell eight days more, weeping for his sins, praying, and imploring God to pardon him; living all this time on three small loaves, which he had brought with him, and on wild herbs like the animals; and being much pleased with the place, he determined to make a cell under that great rock, and there spend all the days of this life, serving God with fasts, vigils, discipline, and prayers, and bitterly lamenting his past sins and evil life.

Having taken this resolution, he went to his own country to put his affairs in order; and all his relatives and friends came about him, praying him with much earnestness, if he sought to serve God, to leave this life of a wild beast and join some order, living like other monks. But all was of no avail; and selling all his goods, he gave the price to the poor, reserving to himself only a small sum of money to build a cell. And he returned to his solitude with a mason, who made for him a miserable cell under that same rock;

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and he bought near it enough land for a small garden, and there established himself, practising the most severe austerities.

Having now spoken of the penitence and life of the Beato Torello, we must make mention of the great gifts and grace which he received from God during his life, and which were often granted to him in behalf of those who commended themselves to him in faith and devotion.

A poor woman of Poppi, who had only one son, three years old, going to the spring to wash her clothes, took him with her; and he having strayed from her a little way while she was washing, a savage wolf seized him and carried him away, and the poor woman's shrieks could be heard almost at Poppi, while she could do nothing but commend the child to God. While the wolf was escaping with his prey between his teeth, he came, as it pleased God — who thus began to make known the reward of his service — to the cell of the Beato Torello; who, when he saw this, instantly ordered the wolf, in God's name, to lay the child on the ground, safe and sound; which command the wolf no sooner heard than he came to him immediately, and laid the child at his feet. And after he had, with evident humility, received the directions of the holy father, that neither he, nor any of the wolves his companions, should do any harm to any person of that country, he departed, and returned to the forest; and the servant of God took the half-dead child into his cell, where he made a prayer to the Lord, and he was immediately healed of the wounds the wolf's teeth had made in his throat. And when his mother came seeking him with great lamentation and sorrow, he graciously restored him to her alive and well, but with the command that while he lived she should never reveal this miracle.

Carlo, Count of Poppi, being very fond of the Beato Torello, sent him by his steward, one evening in Carnival, a basket full of provisions, praying the good father to accept it for love of him. The steward also carried him many other gifts, which some good ladies, knowing where he was going, took the opportunity to send by his hand.

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Having arrived at the cell, he presented them all to the padre, who thanked him much, and returned him the empty baskets; when he took occasion to enquire, how he, being alone, could possibly eat so much in one evening. And Torello, seeing that the steward thought him a great eater, answered: "I am not alone, as you suppose; my companion will come from the woods before long, who has a great appetite, and he will help me." And the steward, hearing this, hid himself in the wood not far from the hermitage, to see who this could be who the padre said had such a fine appetite. He had not waited long when he saw a great wolf go straight to the door of the saint's cell, who opened it for him, and fed him until he had devoured everything that the steward had brought; and he then began to caress the saint, as a faithful and affectionate dog would his master; and this he continued to do until Torello gave him permission to go, and reminded him that neither he, nor any of his companions, should do any harm to the people of that place until they were at such a distance as to be out of hearing of the bell of the monastery, which the wolf promised to do and obey, by bowing his head. The servant, having seen and heard this, returned home, and related it to the count and the others, to their great amazement.

There was a lady of Bologna, named Vittoriana, who made a pilgrimage to the holy place in Vernia, where the glorious St. Francis received the stigmata; and there her two children fell ill with a violent and dangerous fever; and being, in consequence, much distressed and afflicted, she consulted with some ladies from Poppi, whose devotion had also brought them to the same place, who advised her to take her children, as soon as possible, to the blessed Torello, and commend them to him, that by means of his prayers God would restore their health. And going to him, she commended them to him with faith and tears and hope beyond the power of words to describe. And truly it was not in vain; for the holy man, who was most pitiful, kneeled down and prayed to the Lord for her and her children as only the true servants of God pray; and having so done, he took

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some water from the spring of which he usually drank and gave it to the children, and they were entirely cured and delivered from that fever. And what is more, the water of that fountain is to this day called the fountain of St. Torello, and is a sovereign remedy against every kind of fever to those who drink of it, as experience has testified and still testifies.

But at last, in the year of our salvation twelve hundred and eighty-two, the saint having reached the eightieth year of his life, and spent them all in the service of God, — many of his good works being unknown, — an angel brought him this message: "Rejoice, Torello, for the time is come when thou shalt receive the crown of glory thou hast so long desired, and the reward in paradise of all thy labour in the service of God; for thirty days from this time, on the sixteenth of March, thou shalt be delivered from the prison of this world."

The blessed Torello, having heard this, continued all his devout exercises until the end, which approaching, he went to the abbot and confessed his sins for the last time, and received the holy communion from his hands; and they embraced each other, and he returned to his hermitage. And he took leave of one of his disciples, named Pietro, and exhorted him to persevere in God's service; and having with many affectionate prayers recommended his country and the people of it to the blessing of God, praying especially that it should not be ravaged by wolves, he departed in peace.

And all the people of the parishes around, hearing of his death, hastened to the hermitage; and all desiring that his holy body should repose in their church, a great controversy arose, and much scandal would have ensued, had not the Abbot of Poppi passed into the midst of them and convinced them it was the will of God it should be laid in his monastery; to which they all finally agreed. And a wonderful and miraculous event occurred; for while they were all standing around the holy body, a wolf came in with a little pig in his mouth, and passing through them without fear, placed it at the foot of the bier, and went away.

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The life of the Beato Pietro Pettinaio, Senese, of the third order of Saint Francis. Written by Fra Pietro Monterio, and abridged by Don Silvano, from a manuscript in the possession of the holy sisters of Saint Ursula in Florence.

THE Beato Pietro was born in a city called Campi, about seven miles distant from Siena; and having gone to that city in his early childhood, in course of time he became a citizen of it, and lived there until his death. In his early years he was an active and passionate child, but always of good manners and customs.

He learned in his youth to make combs, and he practised that trade for a long time with such good success that he and his wife lived comfortably for their condition; and the more so, as they had no children. While he was thus attending to his duties, and labouring in his calling, avoiding evil companions, the hand of God came to him, working a wonderful change in his life. From this time he began to frequent the churches, and to find much spiritual good in hearing the office and the mass, and also to be a friend of the poor, giving them charity according to his ability; so that it might be said he would have been a good monk. Having once, in Pisa, bought some material to make combs, the dealer would not permit him to select that which was good, but sold him the good and bad together; and Pietro, having made his purchase, went to the side of the bridge, and threw all that was bad into the Arno, saying that he would not do to those who came to his store as had been done to him, and sell them bad merchandise. And thus he practised his trade honestly, never selling his goods for what they were not, but always telling the truth, and asking a just price at first, and abiding by it; and when one said to him: "Pray choose me a good comb," having selected one, he would say, "I should take this one for myself;" so

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that his fairness in dealing becoming known, every one in the market who had need of such merchandise came to him. He was greatly envied by the other comb makers, and in order not to do them injury and give them occasion to sin, he began not to go to the market until after vespers, when he thought the others would have finished selling their goods. His wife he loved not only as much as was his duty, but even with a certain sort of consideration, avoiding everything which might be a cause of scandal or occasion her any annoyance; so that if by chance he was conversing with any one at the hour of dinner, as soon as that arrived he would say, "No more now, my brother, my wife expects me to dinner." He was entirely faithful to her while she lived, and to her memory after her death; which feeling approach, she called Pietro to her, and first commended her soul to him, that he should pray for her, and afterwards left her godmother and her son to his care. And Pietro, having promised to fulfil all her requests, after her death did as he had said; for he supported the godmother and her son entirely until her death, which happened not long after; and he then took care of the youth like a son of his own, placing him with a good man, his dearest friend, to learn the art of a tailor, who taught him both his art and good customs; and Pietro carried his food to the store with his own hands, that he might want nothing or be led to an evil life to satisfy his needs.

The Beato Pietro held the things of this world and even himself of small account, and was filled with love to God and his neighbour, as those are who love their duty, always thinking of Him and speaking of Him on suitable occasions; and besides loving his neighbours for His sake, he wished well to all, and particularly loved and assisted the poor, going to the hospitals and private houses, and making himself their servant. After he had followed this life some time, his wife being dead, he took the habit of the third order of St. Francis, laying aside his citizen's dress, which was a rich one — according to the usage of those times and of those of his station — and wearing coarse grey cloth,

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so poor that Salvi Orlandi once gently reproved him; to whom he answered that he did not know that wearing a better dress could be of any advantage except to please the world, which he had no desire to please in any manner. In his wife's lifetime he had sold all that he had to give the price to the poor; but being told by one of his friends that at least he ought to retain the value of his wife's dowry, for this purpose he reserved some things, and among them a vineyard and the house in which he lived. And after his wife's death he often went to this vineyard to take care of it and labour in it; and once he lingered so long that when he returned, vespers, which he never failed to attend, were finished; and reflecting on this, he said to himself: "Oh my vineyard, I have cultivated thee a long time, and thou hast yielded me much temporal fruit and bodily satisfaction; but as thou art one of the things that perish, I desire thou shouldst not again cause me to neglect those which belong to eternal life." And he sold it, together with some other things, and satisfied some bequests of his wife, reserving only enough for a poor subsistence.

These were his particular friends, they being all good and faithful servants of Jesus Christ:

Guglielmo da Pancoli, wool merchant.
Ser Compagno, notary of the Bishop of Siena.
Fra Baldino, servant of the poor.
Tolomei di Barciglio, dealer in linen cloth.
Mino Maestro, wood dealer.
Bartolomeo di Vincenzio, great citizen of Siena.
Ser Buonfigliuolo, notary of San Stefano; and
Jacomino di Falcone, also a great citizen.

And as all these nine were truly spiritual, five of them devoted themselves to an active life and works of piety, and often met, together with the others, at the Hospital of the Misericordia at Siena. And after having consulted together what could be done to relieve the poor and infirm, each one went, with a companion, through the streets of Siena, carrying food to distribute to the poor and needy; and the other four — one of whom was the Beato Pietro —

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devoted themselves to the contemplative life. And thus, though there were among them different offices, as there are even among the angels, still they all served the Lord God and Jesus Christ.

But how fervent was the love of Pietro towards God it is impossible to relate; for he would be greatly affected by conversing on the love of God, or even hearing it named; and once, when he was with the Frati Minori, seeing a young frate come out of the choir on account of the severe cold, he took him by the hand, and speaking to him of the burning love of Christ towards us, and how much, moved by that, He has done and suffered for us, he so filled him with spiritual fire that he felt himself sufficiently warm, and returned to the choir.

In the church of the blessed Virgin Mary he found himself one night; and after having thought a long time which of God's saints he ought more particularly to imitate, being rapt in spirit, he saw this vision. He saw some angels enter the church, in the dress of women, and spread white and clean ashes on the pavement, from the door to the high altar; and having done so, they placed two royal chairs before the altar. And having done this, they opened the great door of the church, and Christ entered by it, poor and barefoot, walking on the ashes, and impressing on them the print of His blessed feet; and He went to the chairs, and seating Himself in one royally adorned, in the other He placed the blessed Virgin, his sweetest mother.

After this he saw the twelve apostles enter, one by one, and each one carefully placed his feet in the footsteps of the Lord, and so proceeded to the King, who received them graciously.

And soon after the apostles, he saw many other saints enter the church, and in the same manner endeavour to tread in the footsteps of Christ; but none succeeded perfectly, some departing from them more and some less: but nevertheless all persevered until they reached the King, and were received by Him with more or less favour, according as they had trodden more or less closely in the path of the

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Lord. Finally no more coming, and the footsteps of Christ having been somewhat lost by being so much trampled and obscured, a poor Minore brother came, barefoot and having the stigmata, who laboured so diligently, bowing down and blowing the dust away from them, that he found again the footsteps of Christ, and in them, followed by many others, he made his way to the King, by whom he was received with wonderful benevolence and placed near Himself. And thus the vision ended, having given great consolation to Pietro, who returned thanks to God that he then knew indeed that St. Francis, as a true apostle, had followed the footsteps of Jesus; and he resolved to have that saint for his particular patron, and to abide constantly with his followers.

He had his mind always in heaven, and never failed to exercise his spirit in prayer, and in consequence often found himself in conflict with the devil; so that it more than once happened that, being at table with his confessor, he said to him with a smile: "Do you not see, my father, what evil company we have, and that if I drive him away from over the plate with the sign of the cross, he flies to the glass? But without doubt he will soon fly away altogether." And so it happened, for the angel of peace appearing, that malignant spirit was forced to depart. He was also several times persecuted by him while he was praying in church or other places, but by divine aid he was left in peace.

Pietro, being once asked by the Frate Ugolino da Querceto how one could best attain to the grace of God, immediately answered: "By prayer." And he said also that one must not cease to pray, though no answer should at once be granted; for God, who always hears with great and true kindness, does not fail to give when He sees best; and that one should not desire to have the reward and recompense of good works immediately, but leave all in the hands of God, who does that which He sees to be for our best and truest happiness.

This beato had the gift of reading men's hearts, which is certified by many proofs, of which for the sake of brev-

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ity I will relate only one. A Senese, having one night come to the determination to kill his enemy, who had done him grievous injury, went in the morning to the church of the Frati Minori, to commend himself to God and pray for good and success in his undertaking; and he was met by Pietro as he was leaving the church, who spoke to him and said plainly: "My brother, do not that thing which you intend, for you will be punished in your soul, your body, and your goods; and this I say to you on the part of God, who grants you this warning because you have recommended yourself to Jesus Christ." And being struck with wonder by these and similar words, knowing that he had confided his secret thoughts to no one, he asked forgiveness of God in the church for his wicked intention, and requested Pietro to pray for him, and not only forgave his enemy but became his friend.

Among many other virtues of Pietro was that of silence. He spoke little, but prudently and to the purpose, and by him were spoken these beautiful words: "I know but too well what I ought to do, but I do not yet know what I may do." For he made this answer to certain evil young men who one day, seeing a number of beautiful women (but without discretion) pass by them, asked Pietro what he should do if he found himself in such company. How great was Pietro's humility may be known by what has been related; so we will give but one example more. Although he was endowed with so much goodness and simplicity of life, or indeed as we might truly say holiness, he nevertheless considered himself as the greatest sinner in the world, and in consequence the desire once came to him to make a general confession; and after having thought a long time, he wrote all the sins he could call to mind on a paper. And taking this, he went to an ancient and lonely place belonging to the Frati Minori, where St. Francis once spent a long time, called Ravacciano, a little way from Siena, where a poor and small church still stands; and having entered it, he read this paper, and shed over it so many tears that it was finally revealed to him that God had

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pardoned them; and in token thereof, the sheet of paper became as white as if nothing had ever been written on it; by which Pietro was greatly consoled.

As to abstinence Pietro observed all the fasts commanded by the church. It was his custom to partake of all ordinary and lawful food, according to the season, but he ate temperately. He slept on a hard bed, often on the boards alone; and he dressed, as has been said, in coarse robes, which were often pieced with patches of different colours.

It was his habit to go frequently on pilgrimage, but in Tuscany and near his own country, — to Santa Maria degl' Angeli at Assisi, often to Pisa at Ascension, to San Pietro in Grado, and to Pistoia for the festival of San Jacopo; and, in a word, he never failed by all possible means to bring the flesh into subjection to the spirit. And knowing that justice is a virtue which gives to every one that which is his, besides giving to God what is due to Him (as has been told above), he did thus towards his neighbour even more than was required; so that if the city from necessity contracted any debt, he no sooner discovered it than he went and paid it, and if it became known, he apologised for having done so, with the greatest humility.

His advice was held of great account, especially when the sanctity of his life and the great things which God had wrought by him began to be known; so that Fra Ambrosio of Siena, a man himself of a holy life, having asked him if he ought to accept the bishopric of Siena, which had been offered him, and Pietro replying "No," he could not be induced to accept it. But it would take too long to recount the sententious words which he spoke and the holy counsels which he gave to different people; so we will let them pass. There still exists a letter by this beato to two of his friends in Florence, Bartolomeo and Cerino, so filled with wisdom that by that alone one may learn to be — to describe it in a word — like him in the service of God and the path to perfection.

But all the virtues of this beato were accompanied by humility and wonderful patience, so that nothing disturbed

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him, whether sent by God to try him — such as sickness — or evil done to him or brought upon him by men.

At last the time being come in which it pleased the Lord to call him to his eternal rest, in the year twelve hundred and eighty-nine, he fell ill; and asking for the sacraments of the church, he received them with much humility and devotion, and his friend Maffeo being present — whom he had cured by his prayers of a certain infirmity — he sought to comfort him, and in particular to exhort him to prepare for death, to which Pietro replied, and certainly with much truth: "Maffeo, my friend, you speak well, but if I had delayed until now to do that which you say, I could ill do it as it should be done; for one who is seriously ill and near death, as I am now, has too many distractions to make the needful preparation." After this, with a serene countenance and with his eyes raised to heaven, as was his custom, he thanked God; and not long after, being surrounded by all the frati, and having said and done all that was customary, this holy man passed to the Lord, and was buried in the church of the Frati Minori, in a marble sepulchre, with great honour, as may be seen in that book from which this life is taken. Of which book I should certainly have had no knowledge if it were not for the goodness and courtesy of the Signor Fra Giulio Fanchini of Castiglionchi, a Florentine citizen and Knight of Jerusalem; though indeed I knew that Dante, in the thirteenth canto of the Purgatorio, showing how celebrated the sanctity of Pietro was in his time, puts these words in the mouth of Sapai, a Senese lady:

Pace volli con Dio in su la strema
 Della mia vita: e ancor non sarebbe
Lo mio dover per penitenza scemo;
 Se cio' non fosse, ch'a memoria m'hebbe
Pier Pettignano in sue sante orazioni;
 A cui di me per charitate increbbe.

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The life of Saint Antonino, preacher and Archbishop of Florence. Written by Father Don Silvano Razzi, Camaldolese.

UNTIL now it has been considered beyond dispute, even by some of those who before us have written of the life of St. Antonino, that he came originally from Sesto, a noble city about five miles distant from Florence, on the road from that city to Prato. But time, which speaks and is indeed the father of truth, has at last made known that this is not strictly true, in this manner. The most reverend father of theology, Maestro Tommaso Buoninsegni, in his account of the translation of the body of this saint, relates that he found in the annals of the convent of St. Domenico, at Fiesole — in which Frate Antonino, as we shall presently make known, assumed the monks' habit — that in the city of Piscina, at the foot of Mount Morello, lived three brothers — Nannozzo, Lorenzo, and Cenni de Forciglioni; who, on the division of their inheritance, left that place, Nannozzo going to dwell in a city of Cercina, not far distant; Lorenzo to San Salvestro in Valcini a Quinto, from whom is descended the family of the Frilli, of whom a good number now reside at Sesto; and Cenni to Florence, where Pierozzo his son, the father of Ser Niccolò, and grandfather of Fra Antonino, was made a citizen of Florence. And what is more, his reputation having increased, Ser Niccolò was four times proconsul — a supreme rank, and of high honour in the profession of judges and notaries; but more so in those times than at present.

Of Ser Niccolò, then, a man not only much esteemed in his art and profession, but also one who feared God, and of Mona Tommasa, a lady who also greatly feared Him — so that it may be said that in this instance human excellence descended by inheritance — was born Antonino, in the year of our salvation thirteen hundred and eighty-nine, Urban

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the Ninth being high pontiff and Wenceslaus Emperor of Rome. But this being so, the claims of the people of Sesto are not without some show of reason, because, as we have shown, there always have been, and still are, in that place and in no other, so far as has been ascertained, some of the same race as Antonino, who are the descendants of the Lorenzo before mentioned.

But to return to the history of St. Antonino. The education of the child was such as might have been expected from the goodness of his parents and his own disposition, destined as he was to become a true servant of God, and one of the most brilliant lights of the venerated Dominican order; so that it cannot be wondered — as we shall make known — that his early years were no less remarkable for wisdom than his more mature age.

At the time of his birth the name of Antonio was given him in baptism; but notwithstanding, he was, and still is, always styled Antonino; not because he was small of stature, as has been supposed until now, but because being called so as a child, the name was retained, as often happens with baptismal names. And in proof of this, when the place where the body of the saint was first deposited, was opened in this present year, by the most illustrious Monsignore Alessandro Medici, Archbishop of Florence, on account of the translation of the remains, they found him, as the most illustrious Monsignore himself informed me, of so much greater stature than had been supposed that the new chest of bronze, which had been made to receive him, was not large enough, and they were obliged to provide another, as we shall relate more at length, in the proper place. For as his whole body has been preserved beautiful and entire until now, it may be believed that it was most desirable to place it as it was found, perfect and extended, in its new resting-place. If, then, the city of Calaroga in Spain is called fortunate by our poet, because St. Domenico was born there, should not Florence also claim to be called fortunate and happy? — having not only given Antonino to the world, but having possessed him for its own — not only

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as a pastor and spiritual father, but as a holy pastor and most holy spiritual father; and what is still more, possessing his entire body and remains, while those of San Domenico repose, not in Calaroga, his birthplace, but in the city of Bologna in Italy.

It is said — and his works manifest it — that Antonino, from his earliest years, showed himself to be endowed with three rare gifts: with great love and devotion towards God, — which virtue is far above all others, — with a great and acute intellect, and with an uncommon and retentive memory; which last two gifts, when they are found united in the same individual, give so much success in the study of any of the noble arts as to produce, so to speak, a true wonder of nature; for one may happily attain to any degree of eminence who promptly and easily understands what one hears and reads, and can so retain it in the memory that it can be applied on any time or occasion when it may be useful.

As for his devotions, — besides those which without doubt he practised at home, by day or night, and more particularly at those hours when well-educated children usually observe them, — it is said that Antonino, while but a little child, had the habit when going to school or returning home, and also on festivals, when he was not obliged to go to school, of entering the oratory of Orsan Michele, and here remaining for some time kneeling before a crucifix, which may still be seen there, with so much feeling and devotion that he was a wonder to all who beheld him; and his diversions and pleasures were not such as are customary at his age, but were to frequent churches, and other spiritual and Christian exercises. As for his ingenuousness, capacity, and judgment, those who have written the life of this saint, particularly those who lived nearest his time, all agree that before he was fourteen years old — as is sometimes the case with those who begin while children to read the books belonging to their fathers — he could understand and quote the canonical writings as if he had been well advanced in such studies. And truly it was seen by his proficiency how

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great one may become in any art or science to which one is strongly inclined; while, on the contrary, there is little or no profit in any pursuit in which, as they say, Minerva must be courted.

As we shall speak presently of the great memory with which the child Antonino was endowed, we shall say no more here, except that all he read he made his own and preserved in his memory, contrary to the ordinary experience, which is, that he who learns anything quickly and easily does not long retain it in his memory, but on the contrary, that he who acquires anything by hard study remembers it long.

Among other orders which flourished in Florence in the time of Antonino's childhood was that of San Domenico, because the Beato Giovandomenico, a Florentine monk of Santa Maria Novella, — a man of holy life, and who was afterwards Archbishop of Raugia and Cardinal, — had begun the reform of his order in Italy, and to aid it had commenced and founded the noble convent of San Domenico at Fiesole, with the assistance of Bernabà degli Agli, a noble Florentine, and reformed those of Pisa, Lucca, Cortona, and Fabriano, to which convents many came in crowds, despising the vanity of the world, to clothe themselves in the habit of San Domenico; for in those times many of the monastic orders had much fallen from their ancient observances and original purity. Among these Antonino, already inclined to religion, often frequented the church of the Dominicans, and listened with pleasure to their services and their preachings, especially to those of the Beato Giovandomenico, who often preached five times a day. By this time Antonino had attained the age of fourteen years, and was well advanced in those Latin letters and studies which are called humanities; and being desirous of serving God in the order of San Domenico, as it appeared to him that one might truly walk in the way of life both in spirit and in studies in the rule of this order, he went one morning to San Domenico at Fiesole, and there, with much humility and reverence, prayed Fra Giovandomenico to grant him the habit of the

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order. But though the good father was pleased with the request of the youth, and saw him to be endowed with talent and wisdom, he thought him too young and too slight and fragile to support the fatigues and austerities imposed by the rule of this order, and he advised him to wait two or three years, and pursue his studies. And as the holy fathers had discovered in examining and questioning the child that he took much pleasure in the study of the canonical writings, and particularly of the decreto, — a volume of the canonical laws so called, — he told him, more to give him some hope than with any other intention, that as soon as he had committed all that book to memory he might return, and he would give him the habit immediately.

The child, having gained this promise from the good father, devoted himself with so much zeal and diligence to the study of this book, not neglecting in consequence his devotions or other spiritual exercises, that at the end of a year he could recite it as readily as the Ave Maria and the Paternoster.

At the same time he laboured with all diligence to accustom himself to discipline and fasting, especially from meat, which he had heard was eaten in the convent by the sick only, and also to drink but little wine, and that well mixed with water; and having completed these preparations, he returned to the Beato Giovandomenico, and having complied with all the conditions imposed, claimed the fulfilment of his promise, which he willingly granted; and he was, it is said, the first to whom he gave the habit in that convent.

But as the building of the convent was not so far advanced that he could conveniently be received there for his novitiate, the father sent him to Cortona, a city of Tuscany, not far from Lake Thrasimene, and placed him under the direction of Fra Lorenzo da Librafatta, a man of holy life and well versed in the customs and ceremonies of the order of San Domenico. In this place Fra Antonino remained, making great progress in spiritual life, and in that perfection, both of character and attainments, to which each day

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found him nearer than the last. The year being past, he made his profession, according to custom, in the convent of Cortona, but under the name of that of Fiesole, where he remained not long; for that of Fiesole being finished, he returned with much satisfaction, and lived there many years, during which he strove diligently and cheerfully to keep his vows to God of obedience, chastity, and poverty, with the others which accompany these.

But above all, knowing that nothing can be more dangerous to monks than idleness, he employed himself constantly in reading, praying, writing, or similar pursuits. He slept but little and ate sparingly, and by night as well as by day was the first to enter and the last to leave the choir; and he not only complied with the rule of his order forbidding the wearing of linen, but almost always wore haircloth. He was not often seen away from his cell or the choir, except walking alone in the garden; and when set free from the rule of his masters, in conversing with others, — though he had no great delight in conversation, — he was always modest, patient, benignant, and gentle; so that the best men were greatly pleased with his bearing, and he was beloved by all. And these and other similar habits enabled him on good occasion, and at suitable time and place, to teach his equals by warning speech, and not less by the example of his life.

The fathers, who at that time held rule in the convent, having for a long time had proofs of the goodness, learning, and prudence of Fra Antonino in the conduct of all affairs, and that he was worthy to be employed on all great occasions, would not permit so clear and bright a light to remain concealed, and gave him, in the course of a few years, the government, one after another, of many of the principal convents which they had in Italy — at Fiesole, Florence, Cortona, Siena, Gaeta, Naples, and Rome.

In all these places he so bore himself that the same fathers found him, more than any others of that time, zealous for the honour of God and of his order, and that he had no greater desire than to secure the salvation of the souls com-

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mitted to him, no less than his own; which is indeed the first duty of all prelates to whom any rule is committed; and they finally elected him vicar-general of the congregations of Tuscany and Naples, in order that he might, as he did, reform many convents and restore them to the observance of their ancient rules.

And although difficult to restore those wandering in the broad way that leads to perdition to that of God, still he accomplished it in many places, as is related by those who have proved it true. But this was not so difficult for him, because he did not, like the Pharisees, say and do not, but all that which he taught ought to be done he did himself, and for an ounce required he gave a pound, so to speak; as all those do, at least imperfectly, who accept such offices, not for their own advantage, but for the love and honour of God and the salvation of souls. And it may be seen that he fully observed all that he required and taught others to do in part. All agree that in exercising these powers, and even those of a vicar, which were very fatiguing, he went always on foot, and when he could not walk, by reason of infirmity, he made use of a donkey, and in his last years, being aged and an archbishop, of a mule.

He esteemed humility and contempt of self so highly that, when prior and vicar-general, he sometimes washed the kitchen utensils, swept every part of the convent, and seeing any need for it, served the monks and other inmates of the house.

Although Fra Antonino was almost constantly occupied in some of these works of obedience, in praying much, — which he did both by night and day, besides at the canonical hours and offices, according to the rule, — in preaching and hearing confessions, in hearing and saying mass, in bodily fatigues (as has been described), though often attacked by fevers and other illnesses, mostly in consequence of his extreme abstinence and fatigues of body and mind, he nevertheless, although he had almost no time except that stolen from sleep, continued to study and write. And thus he did, not only when he was residing in some convent,

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but when he was vicar-general and employed in visiting the convents; for he always carried with him his books and writing materials, though in well-ordered convents and monasteries these would not be wanting: and when the pressure of business and negotiations left him no time except at night, he never failed to take some from the hours of sleep, and this he continued to do until the last days of his life. And besides the great number which we possess of his most interesting and useful works — of which we shall speak in their place — it is believed that the number was much greater of those which he burnt, either begun or partly or entirely finished, not being pleased with them; and as it appears impossible that amid so many occupations he could write so many and so learned works, especially as he himself says that in his youth he was taught only grammar and some logic, there are not wanting those who say of him, as was also said of the angelical doctor, St. Thomas, that he learned more by prayer than by study.

Besides being from the first employed in the care of governing others, he was never without some duties of importance in the service of his order, in addition, as has been already said, to preachings and hearing confessions. And it was his desire that no one should leave him without consolation. It was also said of him that he studied no less by his thoughts and meditations, as we may read of some other holy men, when he was journeying, on foot or on his mule, than when he was alone in his cell; for having his heart always raised to God, and his mind occupied with that work which he had then in hand for His service, and that of his neighbour, he afterwards wrote down what he had prepared by his thoughts at night while others slept.

And truly the studies of monks and others, especially of those who write, are often as great in other places as in libraries surrounded by books; for it happens to them, if they fulfil their duties, as to young people in love, who, wherever they may go, are said to have their hearts left in one place. To these continual studies of Padre Antonino may be added what is above all, — the grace of the Lord,

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which was always with him; so that it is not miraculous that among so many other labours he found time to write so many and so learned books.

Before we pass to other subjects it will be well to recount some of the miracles wrought by God by means of his servant Antonino, in testimony of his sanctity, before he was made archbishop. As he was one day returning from Florence to Fiesole, where he lived, by the road through the gate of San Gallo, he saw on the bank of the Mugnone a poor little contadina girl, who was crying bitterly, because, as she told him, she had broken in pieces the bowl in which she had brought some clothes to wash, and she was afraid her mother would scold her, and perhaps beat her. And being grieved at this, after having tried to console her by kind words, seeing her in despair and afraid to return home without the bowl, he took the pieces of it and laid them together, and returned her the bowl sound and whole as at first, and told her to take it home, which she gladly did without delay.

In the garden of the convent of the sisters of the order of San Domenico in Naples, all the orange and lemon trees were killed one severe winter by the cold, except one single lemon-tree, which Antonino the servant of God had planted with his own hands.

While this good father was leading so praiseworthy a life to the honour of God and his religion and the good of men, never wearying of his labours, and bearing with patience not only great fatigue of body and mind, but also those infirmities which almost always more or less assailed him, it happened that Monsignore Fabarella, Cardinal and Archbishop of Florence, passed from this to the other life; which was no sooner known at the court than many were proposed to Pope Eugenio the Fourth to be elected archbishop in the place of Monsignore Fabarella. But on the other hand, the Signoria of Florence prayed him, by means of their ambassador, to elect one who, not only by wisdom and goodness might be worthy and sufficient for so weighty a charge, but might also be one of their own citizens; and the pope, being

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very cautious in these matters, — as those should be who must give account to God for the souls committed to their care, to give them in charge to good pastors, — was at a loss how to decide. At last it being God's will, the Florentine church having been vacant nine months, it chanced that His Holiness went one day, as was his custom, to a chapel in the palace of the Vatican, where Fra Giovanni Angelico of Fiesole, of the order of San Domenico, was painting some pictures; who was not only a most excellent painter, as his works testify, of which many may be seen, but a man of saintly life. And the pope, conversing with him, told him he was constantly thinking anxiously how he ought to decide in the case, and on whom to make the election fall of an archbishop for Florence, his country, among all those who were recommended to him by cardinals, by princes, by the Florentines, and by others.

Fra Angelico hearing this, as one who had thought much on the subject, took occasion to speak his mind, and said to the pope that if he desired to satisfy his conscience by giving to the Florentine church a pastor who was an example of wisdom and sanctity of life, and at the same time to satisfy the Florentines, whom he had shown himself desirous of gratifying in this affair, he could and ought elect no one save Fra Antonino, a Florentine of the order of San Domenico; who as vicar of the province was now on his visitation in the kingdom of Naples. And briefly, without in anything departing from the truth, he spoke in such a manner that the pope perceived the counsel of Fra Giovanni to be the best, and the words which he spoke to be dictated by the Holy Spirit; and having taken his resolution he determined to fulfil it at once before it had passed from his mind, or any one else had knowledge of it; and the next morning he assembled the consistory, and unexpectedly to all, he alleged his reasons and pronounced the Florentine, Fra Antonino, of the order of preachers, Bishop of Florence.

This greatly pleased those who knew this good father, particularly as he had not been thought of; and they congratulated His Holiness on his choice, and soon those who

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did not know him so well found that the pope had made a wise and good election. But while all who heard of it, and especially the city of Florence, who knew well what manner of man he was, were pleased and thankful, the holy father, as one who thinks too humbly of himself, was grieved and disturbed; so much so, that seeing he had brought the affairs of religion of which he had charge into good order, he determined to make his escape secretly to the Island of Sardinia, where none would recognize him, and there remain concealed until the pope had provided some one in his place. But while he was making his preparations, he was joined by the son of his sister, named Pietro, who, suspecting — what was indeed the truth — that his uncle would do all in his power to avoid this burthen, had come from Florence, by the advice of many lovers of the public good, to oppose the opinion of his uncle that he ought not to accept it. The good father, seeing by this that his design could not in any case succeed, decided not to fly, but to deliver himself in some other manner from this charge, which appeared to him beyond his strength; though in this he was deceived through his excessive humility. He, therefore, persuaded by the arguments of his nephew and his family, took the road to Tuscany, thinking his friends there would aid him in his design; but when he reached Siena with his nephew and one other companion, there was presented to him an order from His Holiness, by which he expressly commanded him, in the name of holy obedience, to repair to San Domenico at Fiesole, to do that which he should be counselled by all the citizens. And in obedience to this precept he went with his two companions to that place, where being waited on with much respect by the citizens and nobles, and all seeing him determined to refuse that dignity, and becoming more decided in their desire to have no other archbishop than himself, the Signoria was obliged to write to the ambassador at Rome, Paolo di Fanobi di Diaceto, that he should not fail to persuade the pope to compel the frate to accept it. To which letter the ambassador sent an answer in precisely these words — as may be seen by a record now in the hands

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of the most illustrious and reverend Monsignor Francesco Diaceto, Bishop of Fiesole — "With reference to the affair of the archbishop, the pope says he has left nothing undone, either by letter or ambassadors; but he recommends that you persuade him if possible to accept it, and induce him to state his reasons for refusing it; and if, as he understands, he is influenced only by extreme humility, regarding himself as too unwise and unworthy for so great charge and honour, he will inform him, through the Cardinal of Fermo, that he requires him to accept it, and without any remonstrance to begin at once to labour in the vineyard of the Lord." Which command was without delay communicated to him in a bull, which it was ordered should cause him no expense. The father being convinced at last that this was the final decision of the pontiff, to satisfy himself that it was also the desire of those who were to become his subjects, summoned all the prelates and abbots of the city to assemble in the church of the friars of San Domenico on the first of March. And after he had with much gravity and modesty told them his thoughts, and particularly, that feeling himself unequal to the charge, he should be better content that some one should be appointed to it more worthy than himself, with one voice they assured him that not only they, but all the citizens, desired nothing more than to have him for their pastor; and moreover, that knowing the desire of the pope, the cardinals, and all the city, he ought no longer to resist the Holy Spirit, since — as he himself at last thought — to him who is thus called, and who trusts not in himself but in God, His divine aid will never be wanting, as it is to those proud and ambitious men who presume rashly, depending on their own strength. After which conversation, and having passed some time unanimously in prayer, and humbly done reverence to the archbishop, they took leave of him, well content. It having been afterwards decided by the citizens and the clergy that the archbishop should make his first entrance into the city on the second Sunday in Lent — which that year fell on the thirteenth day of the month of March — and all customary preparations having

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been made, he passed early on that Sunday morning, accompanied by all the fathers of his convent of Fiesole, to the convent church of San Gallo, of the order of St. Augustine, which is near the gate still called by the name of that saint; where, after having heard mass, he was received by all the clergy and magistrates, and waited on by them into the city in procession, with wonderful and incredible joy of all the people, among whom he walked humble and almost weeping, the squares, the houses, and the streets being so crowded that the procession made its way with difficulty. But what caused no little wonder, devotion, and tears was that whereas other archbishops had usually made their first entrance into the city on horseback, surrounded by their relatives and friends, and thereby attracting much attention, he was seen humble, alone, and on foot. After having passed the palace of the Signoria, and been received by them with much benignity, the procession followed him to the church of San Pietro, and after he had performed certain ceremonies, according to an ancient custom, he passed towards the cathedral by the Borgo of the Albrizzi. And when he arrived at the spot where St. Fanobi the Bishop of Florence restored a child to life and gave him to his mother, he took off his shoes from reverence, and walked barefoot the rest of the way to the Duomo; from which place, after the usual ceremonies, he was conducted by the guards or protectors of the archbishopric, according to the ancient custom, to his residence, and dined with them and with the canons and others who had accompanied them; and soon after, taking leave of all, he retired to rest.

And as the height of Christian perfection cannot be attained by observing only the usual precepts, which nevertheless lead to life, but also the counsel given by Jesus Christ to those who seek to be perfect and follow Him, to set not their affections on things below, but to lead a heavenly life on earth, so though St. Antonino might, as he well knew, according to the sacred canons, make use of that part of the income of the archbishopric which was granted him in maintaining a retinue, equipages, furniture, and other things

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suitable to his rank, and in living, in a word, like his equals; notwithstanding, he desired to do as he had always done until now, to walk in the path of perfection and poverty in conformity with his vows and profession, to give the Lord all that was lawfully his in the world, and to follow Christ, and not to content himself with simply observing the precepts, but to go beyond them.

And with this intention, after having taken possession of his archbishopric, as has been said, he made no change in his habits of dressing, eating, drinking, sleeping, or being served. He heard and said mass, the seven psalms, and other prayers daily; once a week at least, the office for the dead; all the psalms on festivals; and went to the Duomo every night for matins, and also at all hours of the day; all which things he always observed inviolably, according to his ability. As for the rule of his house, he never kept more than six servants, and those such as feared God; he had no equipages, and only one mule which was given to him; and he desired no plate, or anything not needful, so that he had nothing of silver except one single spoon. The archbishop took no thought for his table, but led the same life as when he was a simple monk, and left the government of his house to the care of a priest named Marco, not caring to concern himself about temporal affairs except in the cause of the poor; for though he himself ate little in the morning, and almost nothing in the evening, he desired that others of his household should fare better than himself, and have more rather than less; excepting only that he required all to fast and eat lenten food on Fridays, and also in Lent and Advent; at which times, in his extreme old age, when wasted with years, sickness, and fatigues, although he fasted he allowed himself to eat eggs. At his table there was at the beginning a little conversation for ceremony, but always, if visiting or journeying, he desired that holy scriptures should be read to him; and what is more, he listened to them with so much attention that it appeared his object was rather to hear than to eat, and that with more attention than the most studious scholar in a school.

But in nothing were the good and holy works of this

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beato, or his ardent love to God and Jesus Christ, more apparent during all his life than in aiding and giving charity to the poor. So that it might be said he was not the owner and master of the income of the archbishopric, but rather an almoner, who expected to render a strict account before a different judge from those of this world of his own income, or all which in any manner came to his hand by means of presents, — all which he accepted to give the price to the poor, — or otherwise; for. without thinking of what might happen in future, or sparing anything, he gave all to God. And besides giving all without reservation, he spent almost nothing on himself; and at the Easter solemnities he gave for the use of the poor and for pious works two hundred golden ducats. These things becoming known, and also that he used great caution in distributing his charity, many would place in his hands the money they desired to give to the poor, and others did the same by their wills, that he might distribute it as he thought best. But besides the charity which he gave to the poor and those who begged by the roadside, he gave largely to many persons and families who were ashamed to ask publicly; and his holy desire to discover those who were in want being seen by God, He sometimes made them known to him by means of the angels. As he was walking through a street on a feast day, he saw three angels on the roof of a small house, and being greatly surprised he entered in to ascertain the cause, and he found a widow and three daughters, all barefoot and covered with rags, who, although it was a feast day, were labouring anxiously and diligently to gain their bread. The holy archbishop was much moved by compassion and praised the poor widow and her daughters, who suffered extreme want, as might plainly be seen, for the sake of gaining an honest living in the fear of God; and he promised to assist them that they might live comfortably and go to church on festivals decently clothed; which he did. After some time, as he was passing through the same street, he saw on the roof of the house three devils in the place of the angels. And suspecting the truth, he made diligent enquiry, and found

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that not being obliged to labour so incessantly, these women had given themselves to the vanities of the world, to adorning themselves and standing a good part of the day at the windows to show themselves and gossip with the neighbours; and what was worse, they had neglected their devotions and the fear which they had of God, and had fallen into many sins. The archbishop, when he heard these things, reproved them severely for having abused the favours of God; and afterwards, like a good shepherd who goes seeking the lost sheep, took care that the wolf did not rob him of these three, by restoring them, as he did, to a good and honourable life.

It would sometimes happen, as God is wonderful in His dealings with His saints, that the blessed Father Antonino, inspired by God, who, according to the good intentions which He sees, opens the mouths of His servants, often gave great help to the needy without putting his hand in his purse, as may be clearly seen in the following instance.

A poor citizen, having two, or as some say three, daughters of marriageable years and no means to give them dowries, repaired, as many did all day long, to the archbishop for aid and counsel. But receiving no other reply except that he must commend himself to God and repair early every morning to the church of the Annunziata, it appeared to him that this would not meet his case; still thinking this holy man had not spoken thus by chance, he resolved to do as he had told him. And continuing to go every morning early to the church, he went once so early that the doors were not opened, and he was obliged to wait in the porch. While he was waiting, saying his prayers, two of the blind men who are accustomed to ask charity there, thinking they were alone, as it was so early, began to talk of their gains and how the world went with them; and at last, after many words, one of them said he had sewed in his cap two hundred golden ducats, and the other said he had three hundred in his hat. The poor citizen, hearing this, said to himself: "Now I see the meaning of the advice of the holy father. This is my opportunity, and if I let it slip through my hands

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God knows if I shall ever see such another;" and approaching the blind men, he seized their arms, and took the cap of one and the hat of the other, and hurried away. And as soon as it was a suitable hour he went to the archbishop, and told him these things, and gave him the money.

The holy man wondered greatly, and sent presently for the two blind men, and reproved them severely for having sought to obtain by means of falsehood the alms which really belonged to Christ's poor, they having no need, as plainly evident. And at last they, knowing how much that Monsignore was the enemy of avarice, and expecting worse conditions, proposed to leave the affair entirely to his judgment, and he gave to one of them twenty-five of the ducats, and to the other thirty. And all that remained was given to that poor citizen as a dowry for his daughters, the blind men being satisfied and induced by the saint to do this charity; and it proved sufficient, because in those times they did not give the great and extravagant dowries that they do in these days.

Besides the other charities and assistance which the good Father Antonino usually gave to the sick and poor on all occasions which called for them, no less to the benefit of their souls than their bodies, he showed himself untiring in these works of mercy in the time of the plague which prevailed in Florence while he was archbishop.

For while all fled from the city for fear of the plague and retired to safe places, one brother even abandoning another, and though it seems almost incredible, fathers and mothers deserting their children, he not only remained in the city, going about every day with a mule loaded with food and medicine, giving them wherever he found need for them, but attended himself on the sick, to the no small danger of his person. Neither would he abandon them though they needed the meanest services, labouring especially for the salvation of their souls, exhorting them to patience, to repentance of their sins, to commend themselves to God, and, in a word, to live and die as Christians; and that they might the better do so, he failed not to administer the most

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holy sacraments of the church. And as example avails much more than precept, so as he in humility and virtue followed the example of our Lord, the master of all virtue, he was imitated in these things by many who were monks, and by some who were not. And in this respect of ministering to the sick in the time of the plague he has been imitated in our time in the last which prevailed at Milan by the Archbishop, Cardinal Borromeo, whose manner of living and performing the services — as may be seen, and as I saw myself for the space of eight days, which I passed in his own palace and at his expense — is in every particular like that of the Archbishop Antonino; except that being a cardinal, he kept more servants, but all of them worthy men fearing God like himself.

Many of the things which have here been related of the Beato Antonino having reached the ears of Pope Eugenius, besides those which he had heard from Fra Giovanni Angelico, he felt a great desire in consequence to see him and converse with him; and having summoned him to Rome, he received him more graciously than can be described, and while conversing with him so benignantly, he found that the facts corresponded with the opinion he had formed of him from report, and he therefore made known his intention to create him a cardinal on the first vacancy.

But while the blessed Antonino was still in Rome, Eugenius was attacked by a grave illness, by which he finally passed to the other life; and feeling it to be mortal, he chose to have him alone always by his bedside; and having received the holy sacraments of the church from his hands, he yielded up his spirit, saying that he considered it a great favour that God had put it in his heart to call this holy man to Rome for the hour of his last need. But it was remarkable that while the holy archbishop was so much caressed by the pope in his lifetime and loved and honoured by all the cardinals and other great prelates, and indeed by all Rome, he showed himself a pattern of humility, modesty, and true and simple holiness of life in all his thoughts, words, and actions.

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Neither was he less acceptable to Nicholas the Fifth, who was Eugenius's successor, for when he canonized St. Bernardino, he was heard to say — this showing his assurance of the sanctity of his life — that he would willingly have canonized the Archbishop Antonino, even then in his lifetime.

And moreover, he ordered that no appeal against any sentence pronounced in his archbishopric should be allowed either in Rome or any other place, regarding the judgment of that holy man as so good and upright that it could not need to be corrected.

This Pope Nicholas dying, and Callistus the Third being elected, and the Florentine republic, according to custom, sending an embassy to the new pontiff, they elected for orator this holy archbishop, appointing him for companions the Cavaliere Messer Giannozzo Pandolfini, Messer Otto Niccolini, doctor of laws, Antonio Ridolfi, and Giovanni de' Medici, in whose company he left Florence. And as they approached Rome, it chanced that a poor man begged charity of him and something to cover himself, and the good father took his cape from his shoulders and gave it to him, telling him to clothe himself with that; which being seen by his companions, they immediately commissioned their secretary to obtain him another as soon as it could be made. But it was needless, as they all saw, without knowing whence it came, that he had another, which astonished them, and they had but one opinion on the subject.

These ambassadors made their entrance into Rome with the usual magnificence, which becomes the greatness of the republic, and were met by all the nation; and it was a most gracious spectacle, and worthy of Christian consideration, to see this old brother in his simple monk's habit among those four ambassadors most richly dressed and with so much pomp, with his eyes humbly cast down, while those of all people were turned on him, as he was known and beloved already by reputation. The day after they had audience in a public consistory; and I shall say only this, — which is more than enough, — that he who prayed, with the

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admiration of the holy pontiff, the cardinals, and other prelates, was the Archbishop Antonino; so that all who heard him thought to hear, not a man — and indeed such a one as he is more than a man — but an angel from heaven.

But this was not the only time that our archbishop filled this office; for Callistus being dead and succeeded in the pontificate by Pius the Second, a Senese, he was by the same republic also sent to him as ambassador and preacher, together with the Cavaliere Messer Agnolo Acciaiuoli, Luigi Guicciardini, Pietro de Pazzi, Guglielmo Rucellai, and Pierfrancesco de' Medici, all five most noble gentlemen and truly of the best families of Florence. Having reached the pontiff, after having performed his office no less happily and to the full satisfaction of all than he had done the first time, he was received by him with as much favour as he had been by Eugenius, Nicholas, and Callistus. And Antonino being desirous, as well as some of the cardinals, to make some reforms, this pope granted him much additional authority, and more than is usually given to such prelates; so that he could defend the cause and liberty of the church from the presuming more securely than in times past. But the Archbishop Antonino did not escape unjust persecution. The Signoria of Florence having taken the part of Messer Francesco Patavino — the apostolical legate who was then in Florence to arrange certain differences between His Holiness and the republic which had arisen on account of some nobles of that city who had been imprisoned in Rome — as soon as this became known by the archbishop, who was absent on a visitation, he returned to Florence and went to the Signoria, advising and imploring them to revoke what had been done by their orders, as otherwise he should be compelled by his conscience and sense of justice to proceed against them by censure. But as he could obtain nothing but fair words and promises, and as the subject was always deferred, the Signoria having come to the Duomo one feast day with the usual pomp, the archbishop, full of zeal and righteous courage, interdicted and prohibited the priests from celebrating the holy office, and the Signoria returned to the palace full of

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anger against the archbishop, as one who had done this to injure rather than to correct them.

But while they were speaking of these things and of what steps should be taken the archbishop arrived, and entering among them, with his usual modesty and gentleness of speech explained and regretted what he had been compelled to do.

One of them, without listening to the others, who were deliberating what they should reply, in great anger, and most disrespectfully, addressed him, saying, among other evil things, that they would make him repent of what he had that morning done, that they would not only deprive him of his office, but would have him thrown out of the window of that palace.

To which imprudent speech the archbishop replied that he had never by word or deed, directly or indirectly, sought his office; but on the contrary, knowing himself to be unworthy of it and unequal to the charge, he had done all in his power to avoid accepting it, as was too well known to need any proof; and that they were fully aware they had insisted that the pope should command him to accept it; and they would do him an infinite obligation if they would cause it to be taken from him, and he would willingly return to his cell in San Marco, of which indeed, as they might see, he had the key in his hand. And to him who had threatened to have him thrown from the window, he said: "You would do me a grace and favour, thus causing me to be enrolled among the martyrs of Jesus Christ, among those who have become so for the defence of the liberty of the church; so that whenever it may please you, behold me ready for any punishment." At last the Signoria, by the words of the good father, and perhaps also by some among them of better minds, having seen their error, became composed and put an end to the cause of this disagreement.

A wretched man, a priest who feared the justice of this saint who was to judge his cause, and who had already received a citation, entered in fury with a knife under his cloak into his chamber, where he sat ready, and which was

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open to all, and aimed a blow at his head, which, if the archbishop had not avoided with the help of God, would have cloven it asunder; but as it was, the knife buried itself in one side of the chair without touching the servant of God, so the priest, not being able to withdraw it, thought he had killed him, and fled in terror towards the Borgo San Lorenzo, where he sought refuge in a house of which the door stood open, and where was no one except one old woman, whom he begged to conceal him and save his life until, the search being over, he could make his escape, because he had killed the archbishop with his own hand. "How?" said the woman; "killed our holy archbishop?" And seizing a stool, the first thing that came to her hand, she gave him such a blow on the head that she broke it badly; and at the same time, calling him traitor, accursed of God, and given over to the devil, she drove him, wounded as he was, in spite of himself, into the street.

The wretched man, terrified and wounded, wrapping himself in his cloak as well as he could to hide the blood, took to flight, following the direct way to the gate of San Gallo, no one hindering him, as his crime was not discovered, and took refuge in San Michele della Doccia with the barefoot friars on the mountain of Fiesole, where he was benignantly received by those fathers and cured of his wound with all care and tenderness; and he afterwards assumed their habit, as he had made a vow to do if he escaped the danger into which the devil had tempted him. When the archbishop heard this he expressed much satisfaction, congratulating himself on being the cause of so great a good as this change. And it was perhaps caused by his prayers to God for his persecutors, for, without doubt, among the other perfections of this servant of God, prayers for his persecutors and calumniators were not wanting.

There came once to him a surgeon, who was, as some say, Master Pietro his barber, complaining that his children were much tormented by the enemy, and were often dragged from their beds and thrown here and there in the corners of the room. The archbishop enquired if he had any books of

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secrets or recipes, as those of his trade are accustomed to have; and finding that he had, he asked to see them, and he found among the good recipes some incantations which the surgeon, who was a simple person, had not detected.

This book Monsignore had brought to him one morning when he went to dine at San Marco, and threw it in the fire in the presence of all those reverend fathers. And it was a great marvel that the air, which had been fine, became all dark and cloudy while the book was burning, and as soon as it was burnt to ashes became clear and serene as before.

A married sister of the Beato Antonino was once complaining of her poverty, and of the difficulty she had in bringing up her children; and the good father told her she must have patience, because the burthen of the care of children becomes brighter in time, and these same children will become, as the wisest of men have said, a comfort and joy. And thus it proved in her case; for one of the three sons of this lady attained the same rank as his uncle Antonino, and the others became doctors of law, both men of high credit and renown.

This servant of God, Antonino, disapproved much of gambling, not only on account of the avarice and desire of others' goods which it causes, which are forbidden by the divine precepts, but also for the anger, hatred, and blasphemy to which it usually leads. And learning that in the house of a certain gentleman they played at all sorts of games of chance, he went there once in person, and entering the porch where they were playing, he threw down the tables and scattered the cards and dice, representing to the fathers not only the sin they were committing themselves, but the evil example they were setting their sons. This reproof so much incensed an insolent young man, but of noble family, who lived not far from that place, whose name I am best pleased to conceal, though it is mentioned by others, that he turned on the archbishop like a serpent, and there were no words of anger or abuse which he did not say to that holy man, and indeed he came near laying hands on him. But the archbishop took it all patiently, and went

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away, leaving his punishment in the hands of God; and but a little time passed before this unhappy young man was suffocated by an attack of quinsy, and thus from whence proceeded his sin came also his punishment.

There was once brought to him a basket of fine fruit by one who knew little of his manner of life, thinking he should receive some great reward in return, but Monsignore made him no answer, except that which is usual with monks: "May God reward thee;" and the man, thinking he had rewarded him so ill by reason of avarice, went down the stairs murmuring against the Monsignore with the air of one ill content. But the saint ordered him to be recalled, and when he had returned, he wrote on a piece of paper, "May God reward thee," and placed it in one side of a pair of scales and the basket of fruit in the other, and while all present stood around waiting to see the end, the writing sank down like something very heavy, and the basket of fruit rose up as if very light, and they heard this explanation of Monsignore: "Thou mayest see how much thy judgment was mistaken. Thou thoughtest to have received no return for the gift made to me, but God has not forgotten it, — as thou mayest see by the weight of the paper, — who will reward thee largely, in His own time and place, much more than thou hadst hoped to receive from me here below." And thus he taught both the good man and the bystanders, by word and deed, that treasure should be laid up, not on earth but in heaven, and that the blessings and prayers of the servants of God are not of small value; and he sent him away in peace.

This holy father continued thus to live and watch over his flock and guide his city of Florence, so that all declared it was like a sacristy, for both priests and laymen strove to depart from evil and to do good, until it pleased God to call him by His grace to his deserved reward of eternal life.

The republic had elected him, but a short time before, ambassador, to go to meet Frederic the Third, emperor elect, who came to Italy to be crowned by the hands of the pope at Rome; but he excused himself, praying them to

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have at last compassion on his age, and to leave him to enjoy that repose which is usually the privilege of the evening of life, and permit him to spend the few days that might yet remain to him in preparation for death; and it was graciously granted him. But though he said this most humbly, his whole life until that day, and also what remained to him, was but a preparation for that hour in which only one of two things can be ours — eternal life, or eternal death, which never dies.

Having at last attained the age of seventy years, and being attacked by a slight fever, he went to a place called Santo Antonio, a little way from the gate of San Gallo, on the road to Montughi, — now all in ruins, — intending to pass one or two days there. But the fever increasing, and being worn out with his labours, it became evident by the first of May that he could not long survive.

And having sent for his brothers of San Marco, and they standing around his bed, after having confessed, he desired them to read him a plenary absolution sent to him by His Holiness, Pope Pius the Second, who was then in Florence on his way to Mantua. And the evening having come, he took the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, and asked and received extreme unction from the hands of the same brothers. Soon after, his most familiar friend, Messer Francesco da Castiglione, came to visit him, and saying to him that he must hope that God would not take him from his flock, he answered: "God's will be done, but remember that the years of our life are threescore and ten" — thus saying, by means of this verse of the psalms, that he had attained that age which was to be the end of his life, for he was then two months past seventy years. Messer Francesco having left him, the holy father requested the friars to say the vigils, which they did, he listening attentively; but when they had finished, thinking perhaps they did not wish to say more at that time, he himself intoned the beginning of the psalm, "O Lord, hear the voice of my prayer," and when he came to the twenty-fourth verse of the psalm, which says, "Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord," he

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raised his hands and repeated it a second time, in accents of fervent love. Matins being finished, he was heard to repeat devoutly to himself several times, — as he was often accustomed to do while in health, — "Oh God, stretch forth thine hand to my help," and also, "To serve God is to reign," which words were often upon his lips; and at last on the following morning, about daybreak, the vigil of the Ascension, while embracing the crucifix he rendered his holy soul to his Creator, it being the second day of May. The glorious Archbishop Antonino had filled the episcopal chair thirteen years and two months, and had attained the age of seventy years and two months when his soul passed into paradise, to receive from the blessed Lord his reward and crown for having finished his course, kept the faith, and worthily employed the talents given him by God. In the course of the morning the death of their pastor became known to all in the city; and as they had seen in him all those resplendent virtues which Jesus Christ the Son of God declares to be the duty of a true and good shepherd who is not an hireling, it would be superfluous to say that they lamented him with sorrowful tears and sorrowful hearts. And indeed they had reason, for seldom does the Giver of all Good bestow such gifts. But the most wise consoled themselves, not only because the event was inevitable, and could not in any case be long delayed, but they hoped for his prayers in heaven as they had had them on earth.

Here it may not be amiss to say that I remember to have read that the great Cosimo de' Medici — il Vecchio — who was by public decree called the father of his country, and whose life I wrote some years since, was once heard to say that he had no doubt that the city of Florence had been often delivered from many and grievous perils of wars, famines, earthquakes, inundations, and other calamities by the merits and intercessions of St. Antonino in his life-time. And if this was the conviction of this great man, who himself passed to the other life not many years after the archbishop, what must we say after one hundred and twenty-five years?

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In these days, the pope being in Florence, as has already been said, felt himself greatly afflicted when he heard of the death of the blessed Antonino, and for the sake of the much love he bore him, as well as that it was due to his high rank, he desired that, as this saint had in his life given an example of following the footsteps of Christ in the path of humility, he should, as far as might be on the part of men, be honoured and exalted. He gave command to the Cardinal of San Marco, who afterwards succeeded him in the pontificate under the name of Paul the Second, that he should perform the ceremonies of the obsequies with the greatest number of bishops it was possible to assemble.

This he did willingly, not only because it was the will of the pope, but also due to the archbishop, and because in his lifetime he had been his dearest friend. And on the part of the city there was nothing wanting that the pomp and magnificence of the funeral should be suitable to the merits and greatness of the archbishop. All the clergy of the city being convoked, the holy body was first borne to the cathedral by six bishops in their pontifical robes, attended by many prelates and other great men of the court, who had been sent by the pope in honour of the obsequies.

After them followed all the relatives and friends of the archbishop, clothed in mourning robes, with long trains, and the customary insignia, which were left suspended in the temple where the archbishop was laid.

Behind these came all the magistrates and gentlemen, and an innumerable crowd of the people of the city and the country round, attracted not only by the splendour of the funeral, but by their desire to kiss the feet of the archbishop, and to look on his face for the last time. All the ceremonies being finished, the holy body, as he had ordered in his lifetime, was carried to San Marco, but not immediately buried, because it was needful to defer this for eight entire days to satisfy the great numbers who came from the neighbouring cities to see it.

The eight days being past, the holy body was laid in a simple tomb close to the choir, but outside, near the en-

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trance on the left hand, and a chapel was made over it and an altar with a grating in front, through which could be seen the coffin and a lamp, which was kept always burning. Thus the holy remains of the blessed Antonino reposed undisturbed until this year, fifteen hundred and eighty-nine, when the translation of them took place, which will be hereafter described.

And though Pope Pius the Fifth, of blessed memory, of the same order of preachers, desired the fathers of San Marco to bestow on him a single finger of the saint, still having understood from the father Fra Santi Cini, sent by them to Rome on this matter, that the sepulchre where the relics were first deposited had never been opened, and ought not to be without suitable solemnities, he resolved to defer his request for that time.

The process of the canonization of this saint was commenced by Pope Leo the Tenth, of the Medici, and concluded at the instance of Cardinal Giulio, of the same family, by Pope Adrian the Seventh, who canonized him on the feast of the Holy Trinity, the last day of May, fifteen hundred and twenty-three, sixty-four years after his death. And St. Benone, Bishop of Saxony in Germany, was canonized at the same time, who had been dead four hundred years.

Of the translation of the body of Saint Antonino, which took place on the ninth of May, in the year fifteen hundred and eighty-nine.

IT seems to me that it would not be fitting to omit altogether some short account of the solemn translation of the body of this saint, which has been described at length in more ample and learned narrations.

The principal fathers of the order of San Domenico, and especially of the province of Tuscany, had often wished for and consulted on the removal of the body and relics of the

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Archbishop Antonino to a more honourable place than they at first occupied, and with this intention Father Maestro Francesco Romei da Castiglione, of Arezzo, general and son of the convent of San Marco, decided to build a chapel in this convent, similar to the celebrated chapel at Salamanca in Spain, to contain these relics. He had already, in the year fifteen hundred and fifty-one, provided many stones of great value and beauty for the new sepulchre, when the death of this good father interrupted the fulfilment of the plan, and it was contemplated to transfer to the church of the Minerva at Rome the chapel designed by him for San Marco, through respect to the opinion of the new general who was elected. There are not wanting those who believe that when the father Fra Santi Cini went to Rome, as has been said before, on account of the finger of this saint, which Pope Pius the Fifth desired to possess, he went also, and perhaps principally, to ascertain the mind of the pope, who had always held this saint in great veneration, and if he would be willing to bear the expense of the translation.

However this may be, the subject was often agitated among these fathers, but nothing had been done in conformity to their wishes, when finally the most illustrious Averardo and Antonio Salviati, in conformity with the will of Filippo their father, — which, however, they greatly and incredibly surpassed, — resolved to build a magnificent chapel and sepulchre in San Marco to contain the body of St. Antonino, and having consulted the friars of the order of San Domenico, and particularly the Tuscans, they took the work in hand, in the year fifteen hundred and eighty, with so much zeal that it was finished as soon as possible, and nothing was wanting that could be had or even desired. And as it is not only lavish and princely expenditure that makes admirable and magnificent edifices and temples, but also excellent workmen, they selected for architect and sculptor of the statues of bronze and marble the truly most excellent and never sufficiently to be praised John of Bologna, the Fleming, sculptor to the most serene Grand Duke of Tuscany; and for painter of the frescoes on the cupola, and

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of the principal picture, Alessandro Allori, called il Bronzino; and of the other two pictures — for there are three — Francesco da Poppi and Battista Naldini, a Florentine, both truly most excellent painters; the first of them painted Christ healing the leper, the other the calling of St. Matthew from the seat of custom to the apostolate. All of whom, together with the other masters, — who have nobly wrought the foreign marbles, which are so numerous, and especially the predella of the altar, — finished their works, comprising all the beautiful statues of marble and of bronze, and the scenes in basso rilievo, also of metal, and the pictures and works in fresco, in which may be seen clearly expressed the most notable actions, virtues, and miracles of St. Antonino, in this present year fifteen hundred and eighty-nine, to the entire satisfaction of all who see it, as well as of all those who may see it in future days. And as these Signori Salviati desired, by the favour of the most serene grand duke, the translation of this holy body was made in the midst of the greatest and most solemn festival and rejoicing ever seen in the city of Florence, which was that for the celebration of the most happy nuptials of this Grand Duke Ferdinando and Madama Christina of Lorraine. Florence was so full of people from all the cities of Italy that it could hardly contain them, and it was in consequence honoured by the presence of many most illustrious cardinals, and most serene princes and other lords, who were in Florence for the same reason.

The first to bear the canopy in the procession when the holy body was carried from the church of San Marco, after all the clergy and monks of the city in infinite number, were the most serene Ferdinando, Grand Duke of Tuscany, Vicenzio Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, Don Virginio Orsini, Duke of Bracciano, Don Pietro Medici, Don Cesare d' Este, Signore Ferrante de' Rossi, the Signore Marchese de Riano, and the Signore Marchese della Cornia; and after them other lords and ambassadors. And for myself I do not believe that except in Rome, where besides the high pontiff there are always a great number of prelates and other lords,

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there has ever taken place the translation of a saint — which may be supposed to be the work of God, who orders all things graciously — with more solemn pomp, with the assistance of more princes and prelates, with a greater assemblage of people, or to a more magnificent and honoured resting-place than this; for, to say no more of the preparations, in all the church of San Marco there were the richest draperies of gold, of silk, and of embroidery, provided by these same signori to ornament the chapel on festivals, and for the celebration of the mass.

And indeed nothing was omitted on their part or that of the great Messer Benedetto Gondi, who had the care of the work until its completion, that could be thought of, and not only thought of, but nobly put in execution. It must be added that the most illustrious Cardinal and Archbishop of Florence, before mentioned, for the great reverence and devotion which he had for his antecessor, a hundred and thirty years after his death, with his own hands, changed his dress and laid him in the new sepulchre, and, as well as the Signori Salviati his nephews, has always had much interest in this work and much pleasure in being kept constantly informed of its progress. And that which is important and should on no account be omitted, as it infinitely increases the majesty and grandeur of the chapel, is that the entrance before it was made by his counsel and invention, as well as the part that joins the chapel and the altar of the Martini, in recompense for their having accommodated the site of their chapel to that of the Signori Salviati.

In this entrance they have had painted in fresco on the right hand side the body of St. Antonino on a rich catafalco in the centre of the church of San Marco, in the manner described, with the pomp which was beheld by all on the day of this translation, with many portraits from life, among others those of the Cardinal of Florence, of the Signori Averardo and Antonio Salviati, of Monsignore Ugolino Martelli, preaching from the pulpit, of Messer Benedetti Gondi, and others. And on the other side, on the left hand, the fashion and order of the procession with the portraits

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from life of all the signori who were the first to bear the canopy, and of many others.

But neither must it be omitted that the new case of bronze, in which it was intended to lay the holy body, being found too small, and the most illustrious Monsignore not wishing, as has been mentioned before, that the body should be disturbed after having been so perfectly preserved for so many years, had a strong case of wood prepared, of sufficient size, covered with crimson velvet and gold lace, in which he was placed all newly and richly dressed; and over this case was laid the cover of that of bronze, made in the likeness of this saint in his pontifical robes. But, as has been told me by Messer Benedetto Gondi himself, the Signori Salviati have determined to have a new case of bronze made as soon as Giovanni of Bologna can undertake it, that thus this great and magnificent work, on which more than forty thousand ducats have been already expended, should be completed to perfection.

The life of the Beato Thomma of Florence, Franciscan. Written by unknown but judicious authors

THE goodness of God, in order to increase and exalt His holy name, and to provide for the salvation of the faithful, has in all times given to His church some of His devoted friends, who by their teachings and example have shown to others the true road that leads to God, openly preaching by testimony of their words and lives Him who is alone the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

One of whom has been in these latter times the man of God, Fra Thomma of Firenze, whose holy deeds I now undertake to write; not fully, in consequence of the negligence of those who lived in his time, but imperfectly, having journeyed through many parts of Italy, with no little fatigue, and learned from truthful and holy men these things which I now write, part of which they saw and part of which they heard from his holy disciples.

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The Beato Thomma was born of honest parents who came from Linari, a place in the Valdelsa in the Florentine district, to live in Florence near the entrance of the Ponte Rubaconte, where his father practised the trade of a butcher, and this son was born to him, who was brought up by his mother, whose name was Speranza, according to her ability, in the fear of God.

But notwithstanding this, no sooner had his childhood passed than he abandoned himself to a life of pleasure and the most disgraceful vices; and on account of his evil courses all avoided him, and were ashamed to be seen in his company; and for this very reason a noble citizen, who, however, led the worst of lives, made him his friend for no other purpose than to make him his servant in evil; in which cause he may truly be said to have served him faithfully, for he murdered more than twenty men for him at different times.

But it pleased God, who made of Paul, the persecutor of the Christians, an apostle to the Gentiles, and of Magdalen, who was a sinner, a mirror of penitence, to raise this man from the mire of sin; for while going on in the road to perdition, God permitted him to fall into certain adversities and troubles of no small importance, so that he was obliged to seek for the assistance of powerful friends; and calling to mind what friends he had, he went to the nobleman before mentioned, for whom he had so many times committed assassination, and asked his aid and counsel, but he answered him both the first and the second time: "I cannot hear you now; you must come to-morrow; now it is three o'clock in the Mercato Nuovo. If you desire to speak with me you must come at night, for I am ashamed to be seen with you in the daytime."

Thomma, being exasperated by this answer, could not contain himself, but reproached him with what he had done for him, and left him in anger, when, as it pleased God, he met a holy man named Agnolo del Pace, governor of the company of San Girolamo del Ceppo, who, seeing Thomma so angry, asked him what disturbed him; to which Thomma replied: "Let me alone, for I am a desperate man." "Why

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do you say so?" said Agnolo in a courteous manner. Thomma, a little softened, answered: "There is nothing worse than having to deal with ungrateful men. For such an one I have many times put both souls and bodies to death, so that if I had laboured as much in God's service I should have been a second St. Francis; and now when I ask aid and counsel of him in my adversity his answer to me is, if I go to speak to him to go by night, because he is ashamed to be seen with me." The good man said to him: "O Thomma, how must you see by this that your wretched life is odious to men, when not only the good but the infamous are ashamed of your company; and moreover, how vain is the hope we place in man, and that according to the words of the prophet, 'Cursed is he whose trust'—that is to say principally—'is in men.' Leave then this ungrateful friend, and hope in God. And I, if you will so do, will be your faithful friend, and will never abandon you." Thomma, being somewhat consoled by these words, accepted the offer and his friendship, and at once offered himself to him as a servant; but Agnolo added: "And in token of this our perpetual friendship, I pray you to come to my house to supper on Saturday evening." And thus they parted, the anxiety of Thomma being easily quieted, because he was really innocent of the crime of which he was suspected by Otto di Balia, which was that he was guilty of a robbery which had been committed by night in the house of a noble citizen.

The evening agreed upon having arrived when Agnolo and Thomma were to sup together, Thomma came punctually to his friend's house, for he had naturally a great appetite, and expected much to gratify it on that occasion; which proved, however, not to be the case, for it being the season of Lent, they had nothing but a little fennel and an apple, and as soon as they had drunk, Agnolo said: "Let this little suffice you for the present, for I intend in another place and with other food to finish this supper;" and leaving the house they went to the company of the Ceppo. When they arrived there Agnolo placed Thomma secretly

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in a certain part of the assembly, where he could easily see and hear all that passed among the collected brothers, telling him to return to him before long. Thomma disposed himself to listen attentively, and it was not long before he heard them say and intone the divine office; and soon after they began to discipline and beat themselves severely, recommending themselves to God with many tears, sighs, and groans, and praying Him in His mercy to illuminate and convert a great sinner. While Thomma was fixing his eyes on this spectacle, behold, it pleased the merciful Lord to pierce his heart, as with an arrow, with a ray of divine grace; moved by which he began to raise his thoughts to God, and to consider His great goodness and mercy, and on the other hand how different was his sinful life from that of these devout brothers.

And thus, little by little, his heart, opening to that divine grace which was knocking, received the light, and the darkness disappeared, and he began to weep over his past life and his so great sins; and having for some time continued so to do, the governor, who had taken leave for that evening, came to him, and seeing him thus beside himself, said to him, smiling: "Do not expect any other supper this evening, and if this has been to your taste I am well content." But Thomma was too much moved to speak a single word, and they took leave of each other without speaking, and departed.

This wretched man being thus touched by divine grace, that which had formerly appeared sweet to him began to become bitter, and that sweet which he had before held in horror, not without the great wonder of all who knew him. He began to leave his sinful practices, his evil companions, taverns, and gaming, and also to employ himself somewhat in his trade, and on the other hand, to have some holy thoughts. And when another Saturday came he went to find his spiritual friend Agnolo, and begged him to give him, as he had a great desire for it, another supper like that of the last Saturday; and Agnolo, much rejoiced to hear this, took him with him four times. But Thomma not being

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satisfied even with this, and the food of Jesus Christ being much to his taste, he went to accompany his friend two or three times a week; and he also began to frequent churches, divine services, masses, and sermons, and to converse with devout and spiritually minded people, who were all amazed at a change so sudden. Having been proposed by Agnolo, he was gladly received into the company of the Ceppo, to the great and constantly increasing satisfaction of the brothers; for he was the most attentive, the most devout, and the most fervent of them all, and was regarded by them as an example, a light, and a mirror of sanctity. In these days that holy man, Fra Giovanni da Stranconio, was preaching in Florence with so much grace and spirit that all the people ran after him for his wisdom and miracles; and a place on the mountain of Fiesole having been given him, among many young men to whom he gave the habit of San Francesco was our Beato Thomma, who, in a wonderful manner, appeared to be clothed not only with the robe, but with the virtues that especially belong to the good and true servants of God, and most of all with humility; for considering on one hand his past life, so full of vices and abominable sins, and on the other that of these fathers, who appeared to him so many angels, he regarded himself as unworthy of the very bread which he ate.

He told his sins to all, and continually wept over his past life and the time he had lost in the world. Thomma was so much devoted to prayer that in whatever manual labour he was employed he appeared to be always praying and meditating.

When the Ave Maria sounded in the evening he went to sleep, and his first sleep being over he rose and went to the church, where he remained in prayer until the frati had said matins, and often he was so sleepy that he fell to the ground and hurt himself much. The lauds being finished, he went to pray under some tree or natural oratory which he found in the woods, and while praying he was often consoled by divine or angelical voices; and this custom of praying in the woods and wilderness he not only practised

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all his life, but recommended to his disciples; and he persevered in these prayers as long as the fervour and spirit lasted, so that it sometimes happened that he remained four, five, or six days without returning, if he was not recalled by the occurrence of some festival; and during this time he lived upon bread, which he was accustomed to carry with him, and when this failed him he ate herbs and drank water, and this principally he did in the woods of Scarlino. And thus he disciplined his robust frame by abstinence almost continually to the day of his death, allowing himself only bread and water mixed with wormwood; and he also imitated the Padre San Francesco, observing seven fasts each year with much devotion, eating on three days of each week nothing but wormwood, and on the others bread with some fruit, or uncooked herbs without seasoning.

When the fast of Advent approached, he exhorted his disciples to extraordinary abstinence, discipline, prayers, silence, and similar things, saying it would be a disgrace to those of religious profession not to do more than men of the world; and thus each one, and he first of all, did according to his ability. And if he found that some exceeded their strength, he with much discretion lightened their burden; but if, on the contrary, he saw those who were negligent or sensual fail in their duty, he would require something more from them, as it appeared to him suitable. And thus all the frati were edified and kept the fast with his blessing.

Although this man of God was austere and almost cruel to himself, he was discreet, considerate, and compassionate in thinking of and providing for the wants of others, without any anxiety or remorse of conscience; and when he was on a journey he provided to the best of his ability that all convenient things should abound for others, though he contented himself with his usual bread and water.

Until his death he wore only a single coarse and poor robe, though it is true that towards the close of his life he allowed it to be lined; he usually went barefoot, and only when fatigued by a long journey wore sandals; and as for

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his dwelling, he delighted much all his life in solitary, wild, and savage places.

By the means and influence of San Bernardino he received under his rule the devout convent of the Colombaio, and with the authority of the Bishop of Popolonia he built one on the mountain of San Cerbone, in the island of Elba; and another at Radicondoli, by the authority of the Bishop of Volterra. He also spent a year in the island of Corsica, and another in the island of Sardinia, and all the convents of these islands were reformed after his example.

After these things he was sent to India to the priest Janni, by Pope Eugenius, in company with the blessed Fra Alberto da Sartiano, and on another occasion to Jerusalem, with this same Fra Alberto, Giovanni da Caprestano, and Fra Hercolano del Piagale, to reform and bring to regular observance the convents of those countries.

When Beato Thomma was living in the convent of San Giovanni della Roccha at Montepiano in the Abruzzi, he went one day to walk in the garden, and seeing some birds flying from one tree to another, he said to them: "Poor little birds, come to me;" and immediately they lighted on his shoulders, his arms, and his robe, and he caressed them as if they had been tamed, and they remained until he gave them permission to go, when they flew away singing joyfully.

Another day he called a blackbird to him in the same wood, and it came and lighted on his hand, and remained as long as he pleased, and then went with his blessing. When he first went to Scarlino he saw a great deer approach him from the woods, and he called him to him and commanded that he should serve the frati in place of a donkey; and he, humbly obeying, placed himself at their disposition, allowing himself to be guided with a halter when they went begging or on other services, as if he had been a mule or a donkey, and in this office this good deer persevered until his death.

The fame of this beato spread through all Italy, and especially through Tuscany, and many were converted from

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their errors and sins. Others, leaving the world, came to Fra Thomma and received from him the monks' habit; and among others the Signor Polidoro, an illustrious Roman citizen and doctor of laws, podestà elect of Siena; Lanzilao, of the royal house of the kings of Hungary, and other nobles; all of whom this beato received as true sons of the Lord, and guarded them with great vigilance from the snares of the devil, sparing neither labour, fatigue, nor inconvenience. But before all things he exhorted them to humility, and to see their unworthiness both in God's eyes and their own, and to acknowledge themselves as poor and unworthy servants; and he enjoined on them particularly the love of Poverty, the Spouse of Christ and of San Francesco; and God, many times and in various manners, provided for the wants of those who were faithful to this Queen, and it is certain that the Beato Thomma faithfully observed until his death the vows which he made in his profession to Madonna Santa Poverta; and when he spoke with his frati of poverty, and also of other virtues, his words were so powerful that they appeared burning from the furnace of the Holy Spirit, and his face became so heated and red that they could not doubt that the fire of divine love was kindled within; and while looking at him they found themselves glowing with the same, the more that he himself practised in his own life all that he taught them.

The Beato Thomma had so much faith in his heart that there was hardly anything he did not believe might be obtained by means of prayer, repeating those words of Christ, that if men had faith but as a grain of mustard seed, they might say to a mountain, "Be thou removed," and it should immediately be done.

But how fully this saint was established in the virtue of patience cannot be described in a few words; neither the opprobrium, the abuse, nor the insults, which in the commencement he received from the monks, and afterwards from the heretics when he began to expel them; and also those which in the later years of his life he suffered from the Turks, and all without resentment and without saying

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a single word except of praise and thanksgiving. We will pass over in silence those which he endured from the monks and heretics, and will only describe some of those he received from the Turks and Moors.

When Pope Eugenius sent his legate the Beato Fra Alberto da Sartiano with letters to the priest Janni, Emperor of Ethiopia, and to the Emperor of the Indies, to reduce them to the unity of the Holy Roman church, he gave him as a companion the Beato Thomma, that by the holiness of his life he might edify these emperors and their subjects. But Fra Alberto and his company being prevented by the Soldano of Babylon from crossing his dominions, they left Egypt, and turning back, went to Constantinople to cross the sea into Persia, and from Persia to Ethiopia and India. But Fra Alberto falling ill on the way, that the desire of the pontiff might not be disappointed, he sent the blessed Thomma and three other frati to put it in execution; but the ship in which they embarked being taken by the Turks, they were all cruelly beaten, especially Thomma, and were sent to the galleys and chained to the oars. But news of their sufferings having reached Constantinople, he was ransomed by some rich Florentine merchants, together with his three companions; and having been taken prisoners by them a second time, they were ransomed again with a great sum; and having at last passed through Persia and entered the country of the Moors, and he with his companions having been carried before their master and been examined, as they would not deny the faith of Jesus Christ, but even reproved the Moors for their sinful practices, they were put into a dry well, where they remained about three months in great misery, seeing nothing but a little of the sky, and with no food but a little meal mixed with water; and even this was at last withheld, so they lived some time nourished by the celestial grace of God alone. At the end of three months one of them, who was a priest, fell ill, and passed to Jesus Christ by means of this martyrdom with great fervour and devotion; and to compel those who remained alive to deny the faith by means of their increased

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sufferings, they left him unburied for many days. But the Saracens, being at last touched by their remaining so long without food, and their marvellous constancy, removed them from the well to a dungeon, where they led a somewhat less wretched life, as they permitted the beato to go out and earn food for himself and his companions, returning to the prison at night; but for his own sake it would have been better to have remained in prison, as he met with such ill treatment, once being stripped and beaten like a madman, another time being dragged by the feet through the mud and stones, which bruised his head and wounded his legs so that he suffered in consequence all his life. But notwithstanding that he returned to his dungeon half dead, he thanked God that He had condescended to make him share a part of that which He endured for us, and immediately he suffered no more from his wounds.

He was often sent to keep sheep, and then, standing at the doors of their mosques, he would praise our faith and blame theirs without fear; making signs that he did not care if they cut off his head, which a renegade Christian told him they had determined in counsel should be the fate of all of them at the end of the year; which having heard, he returned immediately to his companions, and said to them joyfully: "I bring you glad tidings; our heads are to be cut off before many days." On hearing which they all rejoiced, and with ready and cheerful hearts prepared themselves for martyrdom for the sake of Jesus Christ.

But before the day came when they expected death, some merchants arrived, commissioned by Pope Eugenius to redeem them the third time, and they reconducted them to Italy, to their great regret. When they arrived at Florence, they were welcomed with great rejoicings, and when their feet were washed, the friar who washed those of the Beato Thomma, touching a place where he had been wounded a little roughly, gave him some pain, and he drew back his foot, saying: "God forgive you, my son, you pain me." The monk replied, mocking: "Where is your perfection, oh father, who have suffered so much, and but a little while ago desired to die for Christ,

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and now you cannot bear a trifling hurt?" The servant of Jesus replied, and indeed they are words to be remembered: "My son, when I was among the Saracens, Jesus Christ suffered in me; but now that I am among the Christians, Fra Thomma suffers himself."

Fra Thomma went from Florence to his much loved Scarlino, and from there to Rome, where he was received with great devotion by Pope Eugenius and the cardinals. From Rome he went to Aquila, where he visited the tomb of San Bernardino; and Giovanni da Capistra, then vicar-general, sent him to Montepiano, where in front of the monastery there was a hill or precipitous mountain, which rose from the plain like a tower. It was flat on the top, and only accessible by a path almost as steep as a ladder, and this the blessed Thomma selected for his dwelling-place, with the intention of building a little cell on the summit in honour of San Francesco, of which he laid the first stone and assisted in the building with his own hands. This chapel was his oratory; here he kept his last solemn fast on bread soaked in water mixed with wormwood; and finally in this chapel he was found by a novice who came to listen to his teachings. While they were conversing of one thing and another, they spoke of what the saint had suffered at the hands of the Moors, and the holy old man was so kindled with the ardent desire to die for Christ that, urged by the impetuosity of his spirit, he rose from his seat with his staff in his hand and hurried towards the monastery; but when he reached the edge of the precipice, instead of turning to the right and descending by the usual path, he went straight on, and fell from a great height. But the same God who consolidated the water under the footsteps of St. Peter and of St. Maurice the disciple of San Benedetto consolidated the air under this saint in such a manner that he reached the ground unhurt, and some frati who were standing talking about the door of the church, seeing him fall, ran full of terror to the place where they expected to find him lying, and enquiring where he was going in such haste, the holy old man replied: "To Ortolona," which is a city on the Adriatic about eighteen miles

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distant from Montepiano, "to embark on some ship bound to foreign parts; for I desire to return to suffer martyrdom for Jesus Christ and the honour of His holy faith." But the frati tempered his fervour by telling him he could not go without the permission and blessing of the pope; to which the old man agreed, and journeyed towards Rome to ask permission of the pontiff. But having at Aquila visited again the body of San Bernardino, he fell so seriously ill on the road to Rieti that in the evening he was carried with difficulty to Fonte Palomba, about a mile distant from that city, and laid in a cell of one of the fathers of the order of San Francesco, that he might be the better cared for; but growing worse, he made a general confession, and requested the confessor to remain near him, that he might tell him from time to time if he remembered anything more. And at last, after having received the communion with great devotion, and exhorted the frati to the true service of Jesus Christ, and received absolution and extreme unction, his blessed soul passed to the other life in the desire of martyrdom — as has been related — and went to the heavenly city, on the last day of October, fourteen hundred and forty-seven.

In the middle of the church of San Francesco a chapel was built, and here his body was laid in a sepulchre of white marble on Sunday, eight days after the feast of San Bernardino. God's name be praised!

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BOOK III

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SELECTIONS FROM

THE WONDERS OF GOD IN HIS SAINTS

COLLECTED FROM THEIR LIVES

By the Hand of

Padre Carlo Gregori Rosignoli

Of the Society of Jesus

IN BOLOGNA MDCXCIII

AT THE PRESS OF THE LONGHI

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Obedience miraculously taught by birds. Written by Padre Giovanni Bollandus.

"Thou hast put all things under His feet, the fowls of the air," etc.

OBEDIENCE is pronounced by Gregory the Great the mother and mistress of all other virtues, and in order to guide a convent of sacred virgins in the path of religion, the Lord once vouchsafed them a wonderful lesson of obedience. The virgin St. Vereburga, daughter of Vulsero and Ermenilda, King and Queen of Wales, being endowed with extraordinary beauty and virtue, was asked in marriage by all the principal kings of England. But she, kindled by divine love, refused all such proposals, and resolved to become the bride of heaven alone; and having with much difficulty obtained permission from her father, she established herself with many other noble ladies in a convent endowed with great possessions, where for her superior excellence she was soon chosen abbess, and governed with much prudence and regularity of observances.

Here occurred an event worthy of special memory, whose fame was well known through all England. There belonged to the convent a great estate in Verduna, not far from the sea, which being very fertile in grain administered to its maintenance. On a certain year an innumerable flock of wild geese descended on this estate, bringing with them ruin and desolation, devouring first the corn and then the tender shoots, without the labourers being able to prevent them; for when driven away from one side they flew to the other. The agent, or superintendent, despairing of reaping any harvest, went to the convent to give an account of the misfortune. "Holy mother," said he to the abbess, "this year the nuns must multiply their fasts, for I shall have no food for their support." "Why not?" asked the abbess. "Because," he answered, "a flood of wild geese has rained upon the land, making entire destruction of even the green blades; neither with all possible diligence could their ravages be hindered."

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"Is it possible," she said, "that these creatures have paid no respect to the grain destined for the food of the spouses of the Lord? They shall indeed do penance for this. Return immediately to the field and order them from me to come without delay to the outer courtyard of the convent, to receive the punishment of their voracity." At these words the agent stood still, thinking she was saying for a jest that which she spoke by inspiration, and answered: "Mother, this is no time for jesting; these are not sheep to be guided to the fold, but birds, who have long wings to fly away into the freedom of the air." Vereburga replied frankly: "Do you understand me? Go without a word and bring them here, commanding them in my name that they come without delay to render an account of their misdeeds. Otherwise I shall deprive you of your office and place another in your room."

The agent changed his mind on hearing this resolute speech and returned promptly to the farm, not without murmuring secretly at the folly of Vereburga; and when he reached the beginning of the land where the flock of evildoers still remained, he raised his voice, and clapping his hands exclaimed: "Come, come, voracious geese, to the convent, for so the lady abbess commands." Wonderful sight! Hardly had he uttered the words than the geese raised up their necks as if to listen to him, and immediately, without spreading a wing, placed themselves in file, and in regular order began to march toward the holy cloister like a squadron of infantry, only keeping their heads bowed down, as if confessing their fault and going to receive its punishment. And having arrived at the door, they raised them to enter in the most exact order, and assembling themselves in the outer court, waited the coming and the orders of the abbess, who spent all that night in prayer without being disturbed by a single cry of those birds, who are generally so noisy, but who remained silent, as if struck dumb by their guilty consciences. But in the morning they uttered most pitiful cries, as if asking pardon and permission to depart; and the compassionate mother, appearing with some nuns upon a balcony, reproved their rash voracity, asking how they had dared to attack the

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possessions of the convent and take the food destined for the maintenance of the spouses of Christ, and threatened to detain them fasting, that they might experience the hunger which they were willing to cause the servants of God. Afterwards, softening her threats little by little, she began to offer them pardon and liberty if they would promise never again to attack those lands or touch the corn — to which they appeared to consent by bowing their heads; and Vereburga, raising her hand, gave them her blessing and permission to depart, with these words: "Bless the Lord of heaven, all flying fowl."

Hardly had she uttered these words when all the geese, spreading their wings with impetuous velocity, took a flight towards heaven, first making a joyful circle around the convent, as if in thanksgiving for their granted liberty, and then flew away. But they did not remain long absent, for after their departure they lighted on the ground, and on looking at each other as if counting their number, they found that one of them was missing. The reason of this deficiency was that on the night which they passed shut up in the courtyard, the family of the steward of the convent, seeing how fat they were and in what good condition, had secretly taken one, and having killed and roasted, had eaten it. When the birds discovered that one was missing, they again took wing, and hovering immediately over the monastery, they uttered most lamentable cries, complaining of their loss and of the theft of their companion, and imploring his restoration by the clemency of the abbess.

By their melancholy cries, and still more by secret inspiration, the abbess understood the cause of their complaint; and assembling the family of the convent, she began to question them on the subject, when the culprit, fearing it might be already known to her, confessed the theft, and asked pardon.

"Great audacity has this been," replied the virgin, "but at least collect the bones and bring them to me;" which he having done, she made the sign of the cross over the plate, and immediately, by divine permission, they came together and assumed flesh, and afterwards feathers, and became again

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the original bird. And the saint, taking it, restored it to the company of the others, saying again: "Bless the Lord, ye fowls of heaven, praise Him forever."

The geese on receiving their lost companion changed their notes of lamentation to those of rejoicing, and beating their wings joyfully made many circles in the air over that sacred cloister before they flew away. Neither did they in future ever dare to place a foot on the lands of the convent, or to touch a blade of grass. Thus this holy virgin, who herself perfectly obeyed the divine precepts, deserved to have irrational creatures in subjection, like a new Eve in a state of innocence; and thus the nuns learned from these birds to fulfil the commands of their superior, to whom creatures deprived of reason but moved by celestial illumination rendered respect and obedience.

The justice of God in permitting true crimes to be punished by false accusations. By Padre Giovanni Bollandus.

"O give me not over unto mine oppressors. Make Thou Thy servant to delight in that which is good."

IN reading the history of the conversion of St. Ephraim of Syria, one must confess with the prophet, "Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are all Thy judgments." In his youth he abandoned himself to the service of sin. As he was once by the direction of his parents going to a country house at a distance, he saw a cow feeding in a meadow, and moved by childish cruelty he began to chase and attack her with stones, and persecuted her so long, hurrying her over rocks and precipices, that the poor beast fell and died. As Ephraim returned from this feat of prowess he met a poor shepherd who asked him if he had seen a cow, to whom he answered contemptuously: "What cow? Am I a keeper of beasts?" and proceeded to load him with abuse. This was borne patiently by the poor man, but was punished by God in His own time.

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Another time, being sent to the same villa, night overtook him on the road, and as he was crossing a wood in the darkness he met some shepherds who invited him to rest in their cabin until daylight.

He accepted the invitation, but to his cost; for that night the wolves came and scattered and put to flight the greater part of the flock, ill-guarded by the shepherds, who were overcome by wine and sleep. In the morning when they discovered their loss, they suspected that Ephraim was a spy who had admitted thieves to rob the sheepfold, and seizing him and tying his hands behind him, they brought him as an accomplice of robbers before the prefect of the nearest city, who shut him up in prison, where there were already two prisoners both falsely accused, the one of murder, the other of theft.

Being thus imprisoned he complained bitterly of divine justice, he being in such misfortune without guilt; when one night, as he was sleeping, a beautiful youth appeared to him, who said to him in courteous language: "What are you doing, Ephraim, in this dungeon? What crime has brought you to this?" To whom he answered: "No crime, but my misfortune," and he related what had happened to him, protesting that he was really innocent. "Innocent?" replied the youth, with a smile. "You speak the truth as to this crime of which you stand accused, but remember the cruelty with which you tormented and killed the cow of the poor shepherd, and you will without doubt confess: 'Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are all Thy judgments.' Also, that you may see how justly God permits punishment to come, question the other prisoners, and you will see that, though they are not guilty of the crimes of which they are accused, they are guilty of others not less heinous, and you will repeat: 'Just is the Lord, and justice is His delight.'"

In the morning he began to question his companions, asking them the reason of their imprisonment. The first replied: "The calumnious accusation of a murder which never so much as passed through my mind." The other said: "I am accused of a theft of which I am entirely innocent." Ephraim

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then went on to enquire if they had not in some other way fallen into some great sins, for which the just providence of God had permitted this calamity to befall them.

"Indeed it is but too true," said the first in secret confidence, "that I am guilty of another crime. Some days since I was crossing a river on a bridge when I saw a poor traveller who had been swept away by the torrent. As he was drowning, he begged my help with tears, asking me for charity to reach him my hand to save him from the danger of death. But I, savage that I was, would not help him, and cruelly left him to perish. For this crime, and not the other, my conscience torments me." The other then said: "I also feel myself reproved of another crime, but very different from that laid to my charge. Two brothers refused their sister her share of their inheritance, and to have a pretext for disinheriting her they accused her falsely of leading an evil life, and they bribed me to testify before the judge that which was not true. See how different is my sin from that of which I am accused." Then Ephraim began to tell them the reason of his imprisonment, and said: "Behold the punishment of heaven has fallen on us, which however late will certainly come."

At last they were all three brought before the tribunal of justice, where various instruments of torture stood ready to force the guilty to confess their crimes. The first who was examined by the judge was accused of murder, and being placed upon the rack he asserted his innocence, and gave such good reasons for it that he received a favourable sentence. Then the second, who was accused of theft, was examined, and was tried by long torments, but always protested his innocence, so that at last he also was set at liberty. At the sight of the torture inflicted on these men Ephraim turned pale and trembled from head to foot.

But the judge, being weary, commanded that he should be left in prison, to be tried another day; and while he remained there greatly terrified, three other captives were brought to the same prison, concerning whom he had another revelation; for the same youth appeared to him again

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in his sleep and said to him: "As thou hast understood the reason of the misfortunes of the first two prisoners, know also the cause of the sufferings of these three. One is the cruel man who threw his companion into the river. The others are the two brothers who by calumnies robbed their good sister of her lawful inheritance; of their evil doings thou hast already heard. These are the true reasons of their imprisonment, though they are accused of other crimes." Having said this he disappeared, and Ephraim, waking up, enquired of the three prisoners respecting these things, and they all protested they were innocent of those things of which they were accused; but at last one of them confessed having thrown his companion into the river, and the others that they had stolen their sister's inheritance. Then he made known both the false and the true reason of his imprisonment, and also the histories of the first two prisoners; and wondering at divine justice, they acknowledged: "Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are all Thy judgments; because we have transgressed Thy precepts we are brought into captivity."

When these criminals were brought out for examination they were all in great fear, and these three being placed one after the other on the rack and the wheel, they could not endure the torture, and at last confessed their crimes, and were condemned by the judge to death. It may be imagined what horror chilled the blood of Ephraim when he witnessed their sufferings. He turned to God with all his heart, and made this prayer: "Omnipotent Lord, save me now in the hour of my need, and I will become a monk and Thy servant."

Neither were his prayers thrown to the winds, for while the executioner was leading him all trembling to the rack the judge was unexpectedly called away, and ordered that he should be reconducted to prison, loaded as he was with chains. Hardly had he entered, overcome more by fear than sleep, when the youth appeared to him the third time to comfort him. "Behold," said he, "if the judgments of God are not greatly to be feared, which are always right. He never leaves sin unpunished, though the punishment may be long

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deferred, and He sometimes permits true crimes to be punished by false accusations. Still thou mayest hope in divine goodness, which will extend mercy towards thee. Thou wilt be again led to the place of torture, but thou wilt find another judge more compassionate towards thee. When thou art restored to liberty, fulfil thy pious intentions, and bless the Lord of Heaven and Earth, and show forth His wonderful doings."

As this good youth, who was without doubt an angel, said, so it was. Ephraim, when he was again taken from prison, was between fear and hope brought before a new judge, who, having been the friend of his parents, knew him at once; and having asked him some question to satisfy the forms of justice, he discovered his innocence of the robbery, and pronouncing sentence in his favour, he ordered the officers of justice to restore to him his clothes, and set him at liberty; but instead of returning to his paternal house he turned his steps towards the Syrian desert, where, throwing himself at the feet of a venerable hermit, he begged for the monk's habit with many tears; and having obtained it he commenced that most holy life so much celebrated by St. Gregory Nazianzen, who affirmed with reason that no saint had excelled in anything in which Ephraim had not also excelled.

Patience in bearing affliction rewarded by a wonderful miracle. Written by Padre Giovanni Bollandus.

"The trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work."

IN the season of winter the trees are miserable, covered with snow, and suffering from the cold, but in the spring they enjoy great delight, they put forth a beautiful show of flowers, and in due season a great harvest of fruit; so is the life of the just man, who in the beginning experiences great misfortunes and suffers many sorrows, but at last has abund-

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ant content and his heart's desire. "The righteous shall flourish like a cedar of Lebanon." This was seen in the life of the blessed Gonsalvo Amaranto, a Portuguese nobleman, who, renouncing the pomp of the world, was consecrated a priest, and having become a shepherd of souls, laboured with great zeal in the parish of San Pelagio, when he felt himself inspired by God to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land to see those places consecrated by the Saviour; and calling his nephew, whom he had instructed in letters and piety and advanced to holy orders, he said: "God calls me to visit Palestine, and I desire to leave you as my vicar in charge of the souls committed to my care; and first I request you to bind yourself by a solemn oath to provide for my dear flock with the utmost diligence, and also to content yourself with a frugal table, that the patrimony of Christ may be spent for Christ's poor." The nephew, proud of the promised dignity, took the required oath; and the uncle, dressed as a poor pilgrim, went on his pilgrimage, and after a happy journey arrived safely in Jerusalem, and with indescribable devotion worshipped at all the holy places; and his devotion was so extreme that he remained there for fourteen years, leading a holy life. The nephew in the meantime having quite forgotten his oath gave himself up to every kind of folly and sin, dressing extravagantly, giving magnificent entertainments, keeping gaming-tables, and instead of aiding the poor with the ecclesiastical revenues maintaining a pack of greyhounds; neither did his rash folly stop here, for seeing that his uncle did not return after so many years, he forged letters containing news of his death, and laying them before the Archbishop of Braga, played his part with so much address that he obtained the appointment of absolute rector of the church, that he might be the more at liberty.

At last Gonsalvo, urged by his conscience, which reproached him with absenting himself from his flock too long, resolved to return home; but when he arrived there, in a foreign dress, wasted by penitence, and with grey hair, no one recognized him. He first directed his steps to his nephew's

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door, where he knocked and asked charity, but the dogs barked at him so furiously that his petition could not be heard; he went forward and repeated his request, when they attacked him so fiercely that his pilgrim's staff was hardly sufficient for his defence; and at last their master, more angry than the very dogs, sent a servant to tell him with contempt to go away immediately from that door if he did not wish a beating, as it was not his habit to give alms to gipsies and vagabonds. Thus cruelly driven away he went on and wept over such hard-heartedness, but at last taking heart he determined to give his nephew the reproof he so richly deserved. "Do you know," said he, "who it is you have driven from your door? I am Gonsalvo the abbot of this church, look at me, you will remember me. Well have you kept the oath you took at my departure. I thought I was leaving my flock with a faithful shepherd and not with a ravenous wolf. These dogs are then the poor you promised to feed with the ecclesiastical revenues?"

The perfidious wretch would hear no more, but called on the dogs to tear his clothes and his flesh; but the saint would not desist for that from reproving his ingratitude, threatening to have him driven from the post he so wickedly occupied; and the nephew, still more enraged, ran to him, and snatching his pilgrim's staff from his hand, rained a shower of blows on his shoulders, and driving him to the door, pushed him out, saying: "If you value your life, miserable wretch, beware how you threaten to deprive me of my office;" so much more powerful was his love of money than of the nearest and kindest of his kindred.

Now, leaving the history of this worthless man, it remains to us to relate how God rewarded the patience of His servant, who, instead of going to the archbishop and claiming his rights, left his cause in the hands of that God who said "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay," and retired to the shore of the river Tagus, where he built a small cell and led a private life; and after a time, making his profession in a church of the Dominicans, he obtained license from the superior to preach the word of God. Finding that the peo-

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ple had much difficulty in assembling to hear him, as the river flowed through the village, dividing it in two, and the ford was dangerous, he conceived a magnificent project, which was to build a great bridge over the river. But how could a poor friar take in hand a project such as befits a great prince? It was indeed impossible, if God had not wrought signal miracles, so that that bridge may be called with reason "The bridge of miracles." One of these I will now relate.

The saint was travelling, much fatigued, asking charity, when a grandee of Spain passed the same way in great pomp; and when the servant of God met him, he begged him humbly to give him a large donation for the construction of a bridge for the use of the people. He excused himself, saying that he had at the moment nothing by him to give, but writing something in a letter, he sealed it and said: "Take this letter, father, to my wife at my palace, and she will give you in my stead the sum I have written within."

Gonsalvo went immediately with great hope and presented the letter to the lady, who read it and said with a smile: "Brother, go in peace; my husband has amused himself a little at your expense. Do you know what this letter contains? Read it; it directs me to give you as much charity as this letter weighs." The saint was not in the least discomposed by so unexpected a jest, but full of faith in God he said: "It is all right, señora, obey your husband's directions. Place the letter in one side of the scales, and in the other an equal weight of silver and of grain, and I shall be well content."

The lady, to carry out the idea of her husband, ordered them to place the paper in a great pair of scales, when, wonderful to behold, it instantly became so heavy that it weighed down the money, the corn, and the wine, which they laid in great abundance on the other side.

Thus the servant of God by this prodigy "deceived the deceivers" and obtained a great charity.

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He who for the love of God gives to the poor receives holy usury. Written by Padre Godefridus Henschenius.

"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will He pay him again."

THE liberality of divine Providence to the charitable is signally taught in the life of St. Cuthbert, the Bishop of Lindisfarne. When he made his first profession as a monk in the Riponese monastery, on account of his great charity he was selected to receive and provide for pilgrims. One morning early, in the depth of winter, in a great fall of snow, he found at the door a youth of noble aspect half dead with cold. He invited him to the refectory, warmed his trembling hands, washed his feet with courteous humility, and urged him hospitably to stay until the third hour of the day, that his strength might be restored by food. The youth after many excuses decided to remain, and was soon seated at the table with the poor remains of the last night's supper, but seasoned with abundant tokens of good-will. In the meantime Cuthbert, saying he would seek some better provision, hastened to the oven to see if the loaves were baked, that he might bring him one of the best; but not finding them quite done he returned to delay his departure, and not finding the pilgrim at the table, and thinking he might have gone, he went to look at the road which was deep in snow to seek for his footprints, but there was not one. He returned to the monastery, and perceiving a sweet fragrance, saw on the table three cakes whiter than lilies and sweeter than roses, and he then knew that the pilgrim was an angel descended from paradise, not to be fed but to feed him with the bread of heaven as a reward for his flowers of charity.

Another day, after distributing the customary alms, he travelled with his disciples to a distant village, when his companions, suffering with hunger, said: "Father Abbot, where shall we find food in this forest?" The saint replied:

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"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall nourish thee." Thus saying, he raised his eyes to heaven and saw a great eagle high in the air, which descending little by little began to fly back and forth over the neighbouring river, and then alighted on the branch of a tree on the bank. Then the abbot turned to his thoughtful companion. "Behold!" said he, "there is our provider come to bring us refreshment. Hasten to seek and take the food which he brings us in God's name." His disciple went quickly and compelled the eagle to drop from his ravenous beak a great fish which he had taken from the water. They took it and brought it with joy to the saint, who said: "My brothers, it would be too selfish to take the whole. We must leave a portion for our beautiful provider. Divide it, and return half to the eagle as a reward for his labour." This done, they arrived at a cottage, where they gave the fish to be cooked, and gladly refreshed themselves, with a thousand thanks to God who had thus fulfilled His promise: "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack."

It would be too long to relate one by one all the wonderful acts of his charity after he was appointed to the episcopal dignity, and how munificently they were rewarded by God. It will suffice to relate one remarkable deed of this saint in connection with the King Alfred. The Danes and the Frisoni having devastated the kingdom of England with great slaughter, Alfred and the queen his wife were obliged to fly secretly and conceal themselves in the marsh Glestingia, where, abandoned by all, they led a miserable life among poor fishermen for three successive years. One day, having sent the fishermen to cast their nets, Alfred remained in his house in the marsh alone with the queen, when a poor pilgrim came and knocked at the door and humbly asked for charity, which the king ordered should be immediately given him. The servant answered that they had nothing left in the house but one single loaf and a flask of wine, which were but too much needed for that day's dinner; but his master replied: "Thank God, who has sent this pilgrim to visit me in my great poverty; divide the bread and the wine, give one half to the poor man, and keep the other for ourselves.

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'What then shall I do,' as said charitable Job, 'when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him' if I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have eaten my morsel myself alone?" The servant went and carried the pilgrim his half, who on receiving it said: "Go to your master and give him my heartfelt thanks, assuring him that his charity will be rewarded by God. I hope that his benevolence will be largely recompensed." The servant went to deliver the message to the king, and then returned to the door to take leave of the pilgrim. He was no longer there, but he found the loaf whole, and the flask full of wine, although he had given him only half. Astonished by such a miracle, he hastened to relate it to the king and queen, who beheld with wonder the bread and wine, not knowing how to account for this prodigy.

As the hour of dinner drew near, the fishermen returned with three boats full of exquisite fish, whose weight they could hardly support, and declaring that since they had followed that trade they had never had such abundant success, and that it was indeed miraculous. They had a joyful dinner, of which the king partook, passing the day in thanksgiving to God, who had rewarded his small charity with so great abundance.

Night being come, and the others having retired to rest, the king was awake on his bed, revolving in his mind the miracle of the restored bread and the abundant fish, when he saw a light shine in his chamber more resplendent than the sun, and in the midst of the light stood one clothed in pontifical robes, with a smiling countenance, and holding in his hand the book of the holy evangelists, set with jewels, who said to him: "Alfred, my beloved, let not the splendour of my aspect dazzle your sight, neither let sorrow for your kingdom trouble your heart. I bring you glad tidings; God will soon put an end to your persecutions. I, as your advocate, will obtain for you this favour."

At these words the king, with his eyes opened and his heart comforted, asked who he was and whence he came, and heard him reply: "I am that pilgrim to whom thou gavest

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the half of thine only loaf and of thy little wine. In return for thy charity, God the rewarder will give thee not only the half of the kingdom of England which thou didst possess before, but the whole of that great kingdom, as I restored to thee the whole of the food of which thou gavest me the half. So has thy gift been rewarded by heaven. To him who gives shall be returned twofold. And if thou desirest to know more plainly who I am, I am Cuthbert, thine advocate, come from my happy home in heaven to announce to thee thy speedy deliverance from so many persecutions. To-morrow morning go to the riverside and sound the trumpet three times, and at the blast five hundred valiant soldiers shall appear, and afterwards thy whole English army, ready to engage thy enemies and replace thee on the English throne; and when thou shalt be seated there, follow diligently mercy and justice." Having said this he disappeared from his eyes in shining light.

As the holy bishop predicted, so all came to pass. The army assembled at the sound of the trumpet, a battle was fought on the spot, and a glorious victory obtained over the hosts of the enemy, and with the common consent of all England Alfred was established in the kingdom in happy peace; and knowing that he owed his exaltation to this act of charity he devoted himself to works of mercy of royal magnificence. Behold in this wonderful event if the prophet David did not speak the truth when he said: "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies."

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Wonderful providence in deliverance from miserable slavery. Written by Padre Henricus Engelgrave.

"Thou shalt forget thy misery, thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning."

SO wonderful are the ways of divine Providence that with reason said the wise man in the Book of Proverbs that "Wisdom rejoices in the habitable parts of the earth." See how this is manifested in the wonderful vicissitudes of the life of a Norman nobleman, the Count of Bachavilla, who was a faithful servant of St. Julian, and received from him wonderful favours.

In the reign of Charles the Fifth, King of France, a great portion of the French nobility went to defend Hungary, which was attacked by the Turks. Among the rest Bachavilla, a valiant man and desirous of fame, determined to go to prove his valour in defence of the Christian faith.

But his wife, a most noble lady, opposed herself to it by reason of the great love she bore her husband, not consenting to separate from him and take leave of him, or to let him go to the perilous chances of war. At last, overcome by his urgent entreaties, she decided to consent to his departure, and he, having made ready all his armour, took leave of his tearful wife with a loving embrace, and drawing the marriage ring from his finger broke it in halves; one half he gave to her and the other he kept for himself as a token that his heart was divided at parting, and that half he left with her; and joining himself to the other captains of the noble adventurers, after a prosperous journey he reached Hungary, where he did many feats of arms with great prowess and wisdom.

But it pleased the hidden justice of divine Providence to give the victory finally to the Turks, who made havoc of the Christian army and took a great number of prisoners to Turkey, and among them many of the French noblemen, one of whom was Bachavilla; he fell into the hands of a barbarous captain who threw him into a wretched dungeon. The count

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endeavoured in many ways to send letters to the countess his wife, that she might forward the money for his ransom, but always in vain, for he neither received answers nor she the despatches. He passed seven years in miserable slavery, sold to different masters, each one worse than the other; at last he fell into the hands of one who was a tiger, the most cruel and inhuman of them all, who believing himself mocked by the vain promises the slave had so often made of the gold which was to come for his ransom, at last came to the barbarous resolution to take his life; and he gave orders to that effect to one of his slaves, who, a servant worthy of such a master, waited only a favourable opportunity to strike the blow.

This sad news in the meantime reached the count, who, despairing of rescue, made himself ready by fervent acts of Christian piety to receive death from the hand of God. He besought with fervent prayers divine aid, seeing himself beyond all human help, and in particular he resorted to St. Julian, his former advocate, making a vow to erect a magnificent chapel in his honour if he would obtain his deliverance from this danger. Having done this he was surprised by a sweet sleep, and on awaking expected to find himself still in prison awaiting from hour to hour the sword of the executioner, but found instead his feet free from chains and himself reposing in a wood. He thought at first that he was not fully awake, and that he was deceived by a dream which made his prison appear as a grove; as St. Peter, when freed from his chains and led from his prison by the angel, "thought he saw a vision." But when he saw the heavens overhead and the green grass around him, and touched the leafy branches of the trees, he knew it was indeed true and not a dream, and imagining himself to have been transferred by supernatural means to some wood in Turkey, that he might depart freely to his own country, he kneeled down and offered fervent thanks to his deliverer St. Julian, and afterwards began to walk here and there through the wood; and meeting some shepherds, he asked them in the Turkish language: "What wood is this?" But they, thinking he spoke

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Latin, answered in French that they did not understand him. When he heard this he almost thought again he must be dreaming, but asking in French the name of the wood, they immediately answered: "The forest of Bachavilla;" for it was really under his jurisdiction, and he had hunted in it many times. Then more than ever astonished, he looked about him and saw plainly that he was in Normandy and near his own castle, and he said once more, like St. Peter: "Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel, and delivered me out of the hand of Herod," as his cruel master might well be called.

He immediately turned his steps towards the castle, and met on the road a great company of the nobility, who were also going there because the countess, believing firmly that her husband had died in battle, having had no tidings of him for seven years, was about to contract a second marriage. Thus the count had arrived opportunely by the secret ordering of God, who knows how to provide help in time of need. He demanded an audience of the lady at the gate, saying he had affairs of great importance to communicate, but he was told that the time was unfavourable for him to speak with the countess, as she was then actually adorning herself to go to the wedding mass; which the stranger, hearing, redoubled his entreaties to be allowed to speak to her without delay. So the porter reluctantly went to inform her that a certain pilgrim in foreign dress stood at the gate imploring audience. She, as a pious and charitable lady, supposing he sought charity, ordered that he should receive a golden scudo, but he said: "No, I do not seek charity; I seek an audience, and I assure you your lady will find it much for her own interest to hear me before going to the mass."

This resolute speech of the pilgrim, together with the Turkish fashion of his dress, aroused some suspicion that he might bring news of Bachavilla, and they immediately informed her that the stranger declared it needful to speak with her before her marriage, and that he had perhaps news to tell her of her lamented husband.

The countess having heard this, required no more en-

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treaties to induce her to admit him. He passed with slow steps through the antechamber, attracting the eyes of all, who beheld with wonder his pale and emaciated face, his long hair and beard, and his Moorish dress. The countess received him standing near a window, all adorned and arrayed for the bridal. He, making a profound reverence, began to say to her: "I come, O Lady, from Turkey, where I knew a prisoner calling himself the Count of Bachavilla, the lord, as I now discover, of this castle, and your husband. Seven years ago he was taken prisoner in the war in Hungary. Ah! if you knew how great his sufferings have been, all which he bore patiently in the hope of the speedy arrival of his ransom, and for this end how many letters has he written you."

"No letter," replied the countess, "has ever reached my hand, and I have suffered the keenest sorrow, believing that he had perished with the rest of the French noblemen. But if I had known he was alive and in slavery, I would have spared neither gold nor silver nor all that I possess to set him free. Oh! if he would but have listened to my counsel he would never have brought so much misery on himself or such a grief to my heart. Now I find myself —" She tried to say more, but tears and sighs stifled her words. At last she said: "Tell me, good pilgrim, do you bring me no token from my beloved husband? My heart tells me you have better tidings of him." At which he, overcome by her words and her tears, and by her not knowing him, said: "My lady, if I bring him to you, would you know him again?" And seeing from her changing colour that this speech had wounded her heart, he addressed her in his old familiar speech: "My wife, have you forgotten your dear Bachavilla? Look at this half of a ring, and compare it with the other half I left with you at parting, and you will know who I am, and that our hearts are again united."

On seeing the half of the ring, and looking well in the face of the pilgrim, she knew him at once; and surprised by the sudden emotion, she burst into tears of joy at seeing him, and of grief at seeing him so changed. She embraced him

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tenderly, unable to say anything except: "Oh my dear husband! Oh my dear husband!" and would have fallen fainting if her husband had not caught her in his weak and trembling arms. The major-domo and the other servants who stood apart wondering, on seeing them embrace knew who he was, and hastened to kiss their master's hand, welcoming him with affectionate respect. The joyful tidings soon spread through the castle. All his kindred, friends, and acquaintances hastened with cordial congratulations, and the magnificent feast prepared for the celebration of the second marriage served in honour of the preservation of the first. Only the intended bridegroom and his family were overwhelmed with wonder and affliction at this strange catastrophe.

But the count, grateful to his holy deliverer, and remembering the vow he had taken on himself, gave his earliest attention to the erection of a magnificent chapel to St. Julian, and when it was completed, he hung over the altar the miserable livery of his slavery, in perpetual memory of the event, and as a lasting testimonial of the favour he had received.

And beneath these tokens might well be inscribed these lines of the lyric poet:

> Let never heart be troubled, nor despair
> Of heaven's aid, whatever pain it bear;
> For woes are not eternal: on the earth
> The brightest smile in sorrow's arms has birth.

To return injuries with benefits is a work worthy of God. Written by Padre Henricus Engelgrave.

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

ONE of the most exalted acts of heroic virtue which makes man most like his Maker is to forgive injuries and to bestow benefits on the offender, as Chrysostom testifies. "Nothing makes men so like God as mercy towards their enemies." And among the most glorious examples of

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forgiveness to enemies I have been able to find none more remarkable than that of a venerable matron whose name is worthy to be written in the book of life. The story is perhaps already known to you, but not with all the particular circumstances I have obtained from various writers.

A widow of noble rank in Bologna had an only son, the sole object of all her hope and love, who, playing at ball in the public street, had by chance some dispute with a passer-by, who feeling himself insulted drew his sword in hasty anger and struck the young man to the heart; he fell dead to the ground. The murderer immediately fled with the bloody sword in his right hand, hoping to escape from the pursuit of justice; and as he ran by the house of the murdered youth, he saw the door open and went in, not knowing where he was.

He hurried up the stairs in great agitation after the sudden crime, and entered a chamber where the pious matron was seated, who was entirely a stranger to him; and kneeling humbly before her, he prayed her for the love of God to conceal him in some secret hiding-place. The lady was surprised to see his disturbed face and the bloody sword, but not knowing yet that it was stained with the blood of her son, she offered him all possible aid, and led him into a secret chamber, where she carefully concealed him.

In the meantime the news of the murder spread abroad, and having some suspicion of the place where the murderer had fled, the court of justice sent to search with all diligence for the guilty man. Every place in the house was carefully examined, but not succeeding in finding the hidden delinquent, they decided to go away, when one of the officers said in a loud voice, which was overheard by the matron: "It is not probable that the murderer would take refuge in the very house of the man he killed." And one of the others added: "This good lady could not know of her son's death, or she would be the first to deliver him up to justice instead of concealing him."

It may be imagined what horror froze the veins, and what anguish filled the heart of this unhappy mother. She would

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have fallen fainting to the ground if she had not been supported by the extraordinary aid of divine grace, which inspired her heart with the magnanimous resolution not to betray the guilty man for this cause, but to save him from his imminent danger for the love of that God who said: "Love your enemies, bless them that hate you." Neither did she limit her generosity, but going on from grace to grace she added another worthy of eternal glory. The officers having gone, she went with a heavy heart to find the concealed murderer, and assured him of safety, giving him a change of dress and providing him with the horse of her own murdered son and a purse full of money, that he might the more easily escape from the city and seek safety in flight. What must be said of this heroic conduct? Was it not a miracle of divine grace?

Now it remains to be seen what reward she received from God. The pious lady retired immediately to her prayers, when her murdered child appeared to her, surrounded by celestial light, and with a smiling face said: "Madam, I owe you eternal thanks because you have been twice my mother; first in bringing me into this mortal life, and also in giving me a blessed and immortal life. You have so generously pardoned the injury done us, and have so liberally endowed our enemy, that you have opened for me the doors of heaven. I thank you." So saying he ascended towards heaven in glorious light before the eyes of his consoled mother. This is to forgive injuries from the heart. These are works worthy of eternal glory. The street in Bologna where this prodigy of piety occurred well deserves to be named "Strada Pia," in memory of this deed. It is certainly not so wonderful that lions and tigers should become gentle and caressing towards the martyrs as that this lady, so grievously injured, should show herself so merciful and forgiving towards the murderer of her only son.

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Glorious death for the inviolability of confession. Written by Padre Godefridus Henschenius.

"Neither have I gone back from the commandment of His lips."

ALEXANDER the Great, after having confided a secret to his counsellor Efestione, placed the royal seal upon his lips in token of obligation to perpetual silence. With a more powerful seal are the lips of priests who are confessors closed by the King of Heaven, so that they must never reveal the secrets confided to them in the sacrament of penitence, even should they be standing in peril of death.

The blessed Giovanni, a canon of Prague, left a memorable example of this, who chose rather to die a painful death than to reveal the least of the secrets of the confessional. Wenceslaus, King of Bohemia and afterwards emperor, naturally proud and of a suspicious disposition, had for his wife the Empress Giovanna of Bavaria, very different from her husband, being endowed with many excellent virtues. She had selected for her confessor the blessed Giovanni, to whom she confided all her soul, and from whom she received lessons of eternal life. The emperor, seeing that his wife confessed often, took a fancy to know what she told her confessor, either from mere curiosity to know what she said of him or from jealously thinking she might have some other attachment. He therefore sent for the servant of God, and after other discourse let the conversation artfully, but as if accidentally, fall on the empress, and said: "You know how important it is that all the deportment of a wife should be known to her husband, especially in the courts of kings and emperors, and I therefore desire that you reveal to me in secret confidence what the empress has confessed to you this morning, and I give you my royal word to grant you as great riches and honours as you can desire." At this request the holy priest was horror-struck, and with priestly liberty reproved his sinful curiosity, telling him that there could not be a greater crime than that which he demanded.

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Wenceslaus, although in great anger, suppressed his fury to await a better opportunity to renew the attack.

An occasion was not long wanting. It chanced one day that the court cook sent to the royal table a capon badly roasted, which so enraged the fiery nature of Wenceslaus that, forgetful of all humanity, he ordered that the miserable cook should be put on his own spit to roast. The courtiers were amazed at such cruelty, but fear kept them silent. Giovanni alone had the courage to go to the emperor, and first admonished him of his cruelty with gentle words, but afterwards, seeing him more furious, with solemn reproof warned him that he must render an account of his inhumanity. "God shall cut off the spirit of princes: He is terrible to the kings of the earth."

Wenceslaus did not allow him to finish his speech, but, with his face all on fire, commanded the guard that he should be thrown into the lowest dungeon of a horrible prison, and that he should have nothing but a slice of bread and a glass of water, and be left to live or die of the foul air.

The servant of God passed his days in great trouble, well knowing the emperor's object, when the jailer, coming to the window of his cell, said to him: "Giovanni, do you desire to escape from such misery, and to lead a happy life? Obey Caesar; reveal to him a little of what the empress has confessed to you." The holy priest replied: "What! I, to escape from misery, commit such a crime as to break the seal of confession? I will never do it if I should lose a thousand lives in atrocious torments."

Wenceslaus, finding that neither threats nor tortures could shake his constancy, changed his plan and resorted to promises and flattery. He sent one of the courtiers to the prison to liberate the saint, and to inform him that he acknowledged his innocence, that he repented him of the punishment to which he had condemned him, and that of his great clemency he restored him to his favour, and, as a token of it, invited him to his royal table on the following day. The holy priest went to show his forgiving disposition, but first armed himself with a generous firmness against all assaults, and was

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received with great demonstrations of affection. After dinner Wenceslaus remained alone with Giovanni, on whom he opened a new battery of promises and threats, saying that he could not live in peace if he did not know the secret confession of his wife, and that he must not be backward to give him this satisfaction; that he offered him in reward the highest dignity in his kingdom, but that otherwise he would prove to his cost what an angry and indignant king and emperor could do; and also that he would keep all he should reveal to him a profound secret, so that neither the empress nor any one should ever know it. "God will know it," replied Giovanni, "and that is enough; for I dare not transgress one of His inviolable laws. My priestly rank, the sacrament of penitence, and every reason human and divine compel me to preserve perpetual silence; so you may tear my heart from my bosom, but not the secret from my lips, though I should suffer a thousand torments." "And a thousand torments you shall suffer," replied Wenceslaus, burning with anger; and summoning an executioner, whom he kept always at court, he ordered that the holy man should be led to the torture chamber, and there be stretched on the rack, and undergo other torments too painful to describe. The holy martyr remained with his eyes fixed on heaven and his heart on God in this formidable trial, at which it is said the emperor was present, either because his cruel nature delighted in beholding suffering, or because he hoped that the severity of the torture might force the desired secret from his lips. But it was not so, for he uttered no word except of prayer, so that Wenceslaus, satisfied with the spectacle, departed discomfited; and the executioner, weary of tormenting him, removed him from the rack, and the emperor ordered him to be released from prison, that the knowledge of such cruelty might not spread abroad. And being set free, without revealing anything he had undergone, he began to preach with apostolic zeal against the corruption of the times, declaring that he was soon to die in the cause of religion. To prepare himself for a happy death he went to pray in the church at Boleslavia, and to implore

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strength for the last trial of his life. On his return to Prague he was obliged to pass the royal palace, and Wenceslaus, who was standing at a window, was seized on seeing him with a more violent curiosity than ever to know the confession of his wife; and he immediately called Giovanni and said to him with determination: "Reveal to me the secret I have asked so often or you shall soon lose both your speech and your life in the river Molda." To which the servant of God gave no other answer than that which the children of Babylon gave to the impious Nebuchadnezzar: "O king, I am not careful to answer thee in this matter." Then Cæsar called to his soldiers: "Take this man now before me, and throw him secretly into the river, so that it may not be known who did it." The murderers were prompt to obey, and seizing the holy man they tied his hands and feet with cruel tightness, and taking him to the bridge of the Molda, threw him into the river the night preceding the festival of the glorious Ascension of Our Lord.

Thus died the blessed Giovanni, but not secretly, as the Emperor Wenceslaus desired, for heaven decreed for him a most glorious funeral, to manifest the holiness of him who had so faithfully kept the secret of the confessional. There immediately appeared on the surface of the water innumerable little flames like so many torches, which shedding bright rays, moved in beautiful order around, before, and behind the body of the martyr, which was reverently borne by the current towards a flowery shore. All the city hurried to see the spectacle, astonished at such a miracle. The empress herself stood on a balcony to admire the prodigy, and made haste to inform her husband, curious to know what this procession of lights might signify. He, knowing his guilt, retired to conceal himself in a secret chamber, but the whole city spent the night watching in earnest expectation until the morning, when they found the venerable body of the saint on the shore, decently covered with his robes, with a peaceful countenance which seemed alive, and which it was impossible to behold without veneration.

It was not difficult to ascertain the cause of Giovanni's

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death, the cruelty of Wenceslaus being but too well known. The tidings were conveyed to the canons of the cathedral, who went in solemn procession to receive the body of their colleague, which they laid in a borrowed sepulchre until a magnificent tomb was built for him; in digging the foundation for which they discovered a precious treasure in the same church. Thus this glorious martyr, who had maintained the sacramental secrecy at the cost of his life, was honoured by revealing a concealed treasure at the foundation of his sepulchre.

The charity of parents an abundant inheritance for children. Written by Padre Stephanus Bertal.

"The father's charity shall not be forgotten."

THOSE avaricious parents who restrain their charity to the poor to leave a richer inheritance to their children should consider the example of Filarete, the most pious and noble of the knights of Constantinople, who was so bountiful in his charities that all that came to his hand, whether silver or gold, he gave to the poor for the love of God. No pilgrim knocked at his door and went away unrelieved; he met no poor man in the streets of the city whom he did not assist; in a word, his house was the refuge of the needy, his hand the treasury of the unfortunate.

But God, who with the fire of tribulation refines the virtue of the souls most dear to him, permitted that this holy man should fall from a high estate and ample fortune into the depths of miserable poverty, so that nothing remained to him except one small field, which he was obliged to cultivate with his own hands, and thus gain a miserable subsistence and support his poor family by the sweat of his brow, having set free all his slaves. But it was most admirable that even in this wretched condition he gave alms which were large for his condition, preferring to suffer himself, that he might have something to give to the poor.

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Behold a signal proof of this. He was once ploughing in his field, when two pilgrims passed by and asked charity. He answered with a friendly countenance: "My good friends, I am truly sorry that I have neither money nor anything that I can give you, and I pray you to believe that I am more sorry than yourselves." An apology made with so much grace satisfied the pilgrims entirely, and they went on their way well pleased with so courteous a man, leaving, however, Filarete ill-pleased, who thought within himself: "Is it then possible that I have refused to give charity to those who asked it for the love of Jesus Christ? This I will not do. Come back, my friends, I pray you," he called in a loud voice after the pilgrims; "I remember I have something to give you." And what do you think it was? Perhaps the half of his coat, as some others have given? Not that, but something better. He said: "It has occurred to me that these oxen are both excellent, and that one alone is enough for me to plough this small field with, and with a free heart I give the other to you. Go and sell it, and may you receive a good price."

At this offer the pilgrims were astonished, and stood looking at each other, not knowing what answer to make, but thought he spoke in jest to amuse himself at their expense; which Filarete perceiving, he added: "How is this? Do you doubt my sincerity and good-will? My deeds shall obtain faith for my words. I have already told you, and I now repeat it that the ox is yours; take it, and lead it where you please. I am better pleased to give than you to receive it." On hearing this the pilgrims accepted it, wondering at so much liberality, and with good reason, for Filarete in the grandeur of his richest fortunes never made a more splendid offering to the poor than this that he gave in his miserable condition of labourer. Certainly, for this and for his other virtuous actions he deserved to be enrolled by the Greeks in their menology of the saints.

Now it remains to be seen how God, the rewarder of the bountiful, did not allow himself to be surpassed in liberality. This saint had one only niece named Maria, his heiress,

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beautiful in person but still more beautiful in soul. From her early childhood she had been a pattern of every excellence and virtue, so that in Constantinople she was held in the highest esteem and veneration. To this virtuous lady it pleased God to give the reward of her uncle's charity in the following manner. Irene, Empress of the East, seeking a wife for her son Constantine, sent a superb embassy to Charlemagne, King of France, and afterwards Emperor of the West, asking of him Rotrude his daughter in marriage with this same Constantine, offering her the diadem of the East. But before concluding the betrothal certain reasons of state intervened which finally broke off the treaty, and Irene turned her thoughts to other royal princesses, when divine Providence woke in her heart the remembrance of Maria Armena, the niece of Filarete, of whom she had heard with wonderful accounts of her virtue. But though she appeared worthy of the imperial nuptials, both for beauty of face and perfection of soul, still she appeared unsuitable on account of the low state of her condition; but notwithstanding this, she decided to propose her to her son after much hesitation, who although he set his face against it at first, finally yielded to his mother's solicitations. It was more difficult to obtain the consent of the counsellors of the empire to this alliance, who did not consider it expedient, after having asked the hand of the greatest princess in the world, to descend to a lady of so humble condition. But as "there is no counsel against God," this marriage, already decreed in heaven, was finally accepted on earth.

A noble embassy was sent without delay to Filarete, who on first hearing the news that his niece was destined for the imperial nuptials, remained surprised and almost beside himself; but still more astonished was Maria, who did not know if this was a dream or a jest of the ambassadors, and if she ought not to laugh at them before they laughed at her. At last, by the solemn protestations of the messengers, by the dignity and wisdom of their speech, and still more by the arrival of some great lords to offer their congratulations and good wishes for the marriage, they were convinced and gave

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their consent. Filarete knew and confessed that this was the hand of divine Providence, who sought thus to reward his charity and recall him to high condition in Constantinople. Maria was conducted in triumph to court, espoused by the emperor, crowned with the imperial diadem, and seated on the throne to the indescribable satisfaction of all the East.

Now behold if St. Cyprian had not reason when he said that "parents leave a rich inheritance to their children when they give their wealth into the hands of the poor."

Generous refusal of worldly treasure. Written by Padre Godefredus Henschenius.

"He who has not gone astray for gold, nor placed his trust in treasures, has done well in his life."

WITH good reasons indifference to worldly riches was esteemed by the wise man the test by which to prove great holiness, for as much as a heart voluntarily deprives itself of the excess of worldly goods so much is it filled with the love of heavenly goods. San Francesco di Paola, that great lover of poverty, gave wonderful proofs of this. He was held in great veneration by Ferdinand the First, King of Naples, who invited him to his court with loving entreaties, where he was received with great courtesy and respect, and was offered by the king a dish filled with golden scudi to found a monastery in Naples; but Francesco, taking from this an occasion to reprove him for the severity with which he oppressed his vassals, in a severe but modest tone answered that he could not receive the goods of the poor in charity, and that the king ought not to rob his own subjects to clothe others, and that this gold was, almost all, the blood of the people. In proof of which he extended his hand, and took one of the ducats, and pierced it with a dagger, and behold! it distilled drops of blood to the wonder and terror of the king and the courtiers who were looking on.

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Thus were confirmed the words of Jeremiah of riches ill-acquired: "In thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents."

Still more memorable resolution did he manifest in the court of Louis the Eleventh, King of France. This king, anxious above all things for his life and health, heard of the wonderful power that the saint had over every kind of infirmity, and became very desirous to have him in his court. With this intent he sent an embassy to Ferdinand, King of Naples, and afterwards another to the high pontiff Sixtus the Fourth to request him to compel the saint, by means of his apostolic authority, to condescend to grant his request and undertake this pilgrimage. The saint, who had not been moved by the earnest entreaties of the king, yielded immediate obedience to the command of the pope. When he arrived at the court of France, Louis himself came to meet him, and, kneeling at his feet, bade him welcome with the same affectionate reverence with which he would have received an angel descended from heaven; but not thus was he received by the courtier Giacomo, who was the first minister of the kingdom, and being esteemed as one possessed of great medical skill, held the first place in the king's favour, who was always too solicitous for his health, for the care of which he received the princely salary of ten thousand scudi a month.

He, being jealous lest Francis should fill his place in the king's favour, and should thus deprive him of his pay, set himself to work secretly to diminish the esteem in which he was held. In private conference he said to Louis that he suspected him strongly of hypocrisy, and that this parade of poverty was only a tacit demand for riches, and he finally concluded by saying that he might be put to the proof by some costly offering.

The king was pleased with this crafty counsel, and therefore sent the saint a present of a magnificent service of silver plate, praying him to accept it either for himself or his church. The poor follower of Christ made the sign of the cross in amazement when he saw the offering, and with a

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humble refusal sent it back to the king, saying that poor herbs would ill befit such precious dishes, that a wooden bowl sufficed for his poor estate, and that he would not change it for a golden cup. The king, having failed in this first attempt, made a second trial, according to his doctor's advice, who said it was no wonder if the Italian monk had not accepted the gift, as he must have seen that he would have destroyed the esteem in which his poverty was held by admitting articles of secular luxury into his cell; but a present should be sent him of something suitable for an ecclesiastic. This appeared a better course to the king, who, having in his chamber a beautiful image of the Madonna all of pure gold ornamented with precious jewels, and esteemed worth seventeen thousand scudi, sent it to Francesco by his almoner, with a message that it would serve as an ornament for his oratory. But this second attempt failed as signally as the first. He returned it to the king with humble thanks for the honour he had done him, but added that an image of gold did not agree with a stone cell, and that he had a likeness of Our Lady drawn on simple paper, which was sufficient for him. Such was the result of the second trial, to which was added a third more artful still, suggested by the same courtier who, more desirous than ever to bring the saint into discredit, recommended that to make him accept the present it should be offered to him secretly without being known to any one, for being thus secured from discovery and from incurring the blame of seeking for wealth and pretending poverty, he would no longer refuse such precious gifts. He induced the king to put him to this proof also, and he therefore took him aside, and offered him a bag full of golden money which he carried concealed under the royal mantle, telling him to take the gold, that no living soul knew of it, and that he could make use of it, little by little, to found a monastery of his order.

At these words the saint drew back his hand as from burning coals, and replied with an air of disdain: "Sire, it would be more becoming for you to return what belongs to others, and not to oppress your subjects so hardly by unjust

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taxes. Justice to your own subjects is more acceptable to God than liberality to strangers." The king was not offended by this tone, but received the admonition meekly, and being at last fully convinced of his immaculate holiness, held him from that time in such high and affectionate veneration that he consigned to his care his own soul and those of all his court and kingdom. Oh how truly said Isaiah, "He that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, he shall dwell on high"!

Victorious dominion over the princes of darkness. Written by Padre Heribertus Rosuneidas.

"He gave them power and authority over all devils."

HOW many accuse the devil of being the cause of those sins into which they fall of their own wickedness! How many accusers might be proved false by giving them a blow in the face, as he gave to that monk, who, having cooked an egg by the flame of the lamp, and being found by the abbot with the theft in his hand, pretended to accuse the malicious suggestions of the adversary and not the artful cunning of his appetite! Ah! every man is a tempter to himself, and few are the artifices and violences of the common enemy which may not be easily detected and conquered by a faithful and generous heart. The devil is like the crocodile; he flies from those who attack him, and attacks those who fly from him. This may be seen in the histories of the holy monks of Egypt.

Apelles, a holy monk and expert in the art of working in metals, was acustomed after his long prayers to go to his forge and make various articles of iron for the use of the monastery. One evening, when he was intent upon his labour, the devil, envious of so much humility, assumed the form of a beautiful woman, and under the pretence of bringing him some irons to clean, approached him with a smiling face and flattering manner. The saint, who instantly recognized him, without haste drew insensibly little by little

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toward the furnace where the irons were heating, and seizing a red-hot plate with his naked hand, laid it on that shameless face, and I leave you to imagine the burns and wounds precisely worthy of it. At this unexpected attack the disguised demon betrayed who he was by roars, howls, rage, and precipitous flight, lest he should receive a second similar caress, and that with so much noise that he waked up all the monks, who came in haste to enquire the cause of it. Apelles, in reward of his Christian courage, obtained from God the grace from that day forward to be able to handle red-hot irons without harm, as if they were flowers. A great token of greater virtue! Indeed this remarkable fact appears to have been the original from which the angelical St. Thomas took his copy when he drove away ill-conducted women with burning firebrands.

More wonderful still in showing the weakness of the common enemy is the following event. Julian the Apostate, a wicked emperor, had an understanding with demons, and commanded them as a master; for they served him in all evil and were sufficient for crimes beyond his own power, as the Nazianzen wisely remarked: "The devils succeeded where Julian failed." He one day summoned a demon, desiring to make use of him as a courier, and ordered him to go in post haste from the east to the west to bear a message and bring him the earliest answer possible. He promptly obeyed, and behold him on his hurried journey in the shape of a flash of lightning, until he chanced to pass near the cell of Publius, a holy hermit. Here he found himself suddenly stopped by an invisible power, and unable to make the least motion; he tried with all his strength to proceed again and again, but entirely in vain; he remained immovable as a rock. Astonished by this unexpected barrier which he had never encountered before, at last he perceived that the monk was engaged in prayer, and was praying earnestly for the people of God, against whom Julian was exerting all his strength in that embassy.

He stood thus immovable for ten days, watching if the hermit would desist from the prayers which barred his road;

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but finding that he ceased not day nor night, he retraced his steps and returned to the apostate emperor, who met him with severe reproofs, reproaching him bitterly with his long delay. But the demon replied: "My lord, complain not of the delay, but of the unfulfilled undertaking, for in the very midst of my journey I have been detained ten days, and compelled to return." "How, and by whom?" asked Julian. To which he answered: "By a hermit, who by his prayers rendered me absolutely immovable." "Ah, lazy deceiver," replied the apostate, "to allow yourself to be conquered by a poor monk. I will see you well revenged."

But it was not true that he had the power so to do, for he whose prayers availed to bar the road of the demon could by the same means call down a thunderbolt from heaven to cut short the days of the guilty apostate, who was himself a worse demon than the other.

Not only holy men, but also timid virgins nobly subdue the devil. They have had courage to drive him away, to tie him with ropes, and to bring him under the yoke like a beast of burden. St. Giuliana, a young virgin, tied the devil who came to tempt her with a chain, and led him thus bound into the streets with the mockery of the people, and made him tremble at a look alone. The infernal monster trembled, saying: "Alas, my lost power! that I, prime minister of Lucifer, who by strength and cunning have deceived and destroyed Nebuchadnezzar, Solomon, and Herod, should see myself thus led, the jest of a Christian girl!"

So true it is that the devil, since he was disarmed by Christ, has no longer great power to subdue those who desire not to be subdued by him. He is indeed a mad dog, but he can only bark and not bite, except those who put themselves in his power. As Augustine teaches: "He can bark, but he bites those only who choose to be bitten." He is a crafty wolf, but he cannot prey on those who keep watch against his arts; as St. Bernard teaches: "All vigilance must be observed against this ravenous wolf." He is a venomous serpent created by God not to injure us, but to be conquered by us, and to be held in derision and contempt.

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They who injure the servants of God injure themselves. Written by Laurentius Surius.

"Who sins by these, by these shall be tormented."

THE journey which the Bishop St. Corbinianus made from Germany to Rome was not only a journey of devotion, but a triumph of miraculous virtue, as Seneca said of that of Hercules: "It was a triumph rather than a journey." In addition to other gifts which he took with him to offer to the princes of the apostles were two superb horses, a present to the high pontiff Gregory the Second. On his arrival in Trent he was received by Usingo, count of that city, who knew his holy prerogative, with a courteous and magnificent welcome. This lord had a great desire to obtain one of these beautiful palfreys, and offered him any price he might name for it; but as he replied that it was not for sale, he, being determined to have it in one way or another, gave secret orders that it should be taken from the stable and led away secretly. The robbery displeased the saint, but still he made no great complaint, referring his cause to God, and departed for Padua, where he was received in the court of the King of the Lombards, a prince of great piety, with much veneration, and his preaching was listened to as if he had been an angel descended from heaven. On the day of his departure the prefect of the city accompanied him to the Po, that his suite with all their baggage might have every facility for crossing the river, when the saint received a similar request from the prefect himself, who took a fancy to purchase with any amount of money the other beautiful steed; but receiving the reply that it was destined for an offering to the Roman pontiff, he resorted to a stratagem to obtain it. He caused the bishop and his court to be first conveyed across the river, then the mules with the baggage, and detaining the desired courser until the last, he leaped on him unexpectedly and galloped with whip and spur into a neighbouring wood with his companions, feigning to

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pursue the palfrey stolen by a daring robber. After having gone through the wood and conveyed the theft away, he returned to the bishop with empty hands and doleful excuses on his lips. He was greatly mortified, he said, that he had not been able to overtake the robber of the horse; that he had never expected such audacity; that he had done his best to capture him, and that he could only hope that his good intentions might be accepted.

The prelate, who saw through all these pretences, gave no sign of anger, but only remarked that if human diligence had not been able to reach the malefactor, he would soon be overtaken by divine justice.

As he pursued his journey he approached the Appenines, where, finding himself and his company weary with the way and faint with the heat, they were obliged to halt in a forest for food and rest; but it being the vigil of a feast, the steward informed the saint that he had no lenten fare to place on the table, to which the bishop answered that without doubt he would have, and raising his eyes to heaven he added: "Behold that great eagle who is flying to provide us with it." And in truth he flew towards the seashore, and seeing a great fish, he dropped through the air, and seized it in his claws, and then carried it to the company. The steward ran towards the voracious bird, who dropped the great fish at his feet, which supplied them with a delicate repast, after they had affectionately thanked divine Providence. Thus was the saint respected and favoured by the eagle. But he was not held in similar respect by a bear, who, while the horses of the servant of God were feeding by night in a pasture, attacked a mule, and bringing him to the ground, proceeded to tear him in pieces.

In the morning Anserico, one of the guards, seeing the bear engaged in devouring the mule, went to give an account of it to Corbiniano, who gave him this command: "Take this scourge and go to punish the voracious beast." But he refused to do so, being filled with terror, when the saint repeated: "Go without fear, strike him, and then put the pack-saddle of the mule upon his back, that he may succeed

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him in bearing the load, and if he has committed a crime, let him do penance." The guard, confiding in the word of the saint, went boldly. He scourged the bear, saddled him, arranged the load, and led him among the horses, among whom he carried the baggage humbly and gently to the gate of Rome, where the bishop discharged him with his blessing, and he ran back to his native woods.

This is not the place to recount with what devout respect he venerated the footsteps of the apostles, and with what loving demonstration of good-will he was received by the high pontiff, and their mutual exchange of presents. It belongs to me only to recount the wonders which occurred on his return. As he was about to re-enter Padua, he saw at the gate of the city a magnificent funeral, attended by all the most noble citizens bearing torches, who, seeing the holy bishop, recognized him and said, looking at each other with many signs of wonder: "Behold the bishop from whom the prefect, when lying at the point of death, contrite and penitent, confessed he had stolen his horse! Oh terrible retribution of divine justice!" The funeral train passed on, and Corbiniano was again courteously received by the King of the Lombards, who requested him to seat himself at his side on the royal throne, before which, as they were discoursing of his wonderful journey, a noble lady presented herself, the wife of the deceased prefect; who, pale and tearful, prostrated herself at the feet of the saint and said: "My dying husband has confessed, with compunction, his crime in having fraudulently carried away a horse. He has acknowledged his death to be the punishment of his offence, for on the anniversary of the very day on which he committed the robbery he was attacked by the malignant fever of which he shortly after died. Before his death he charged me to restore the horse to you on your return, and it stands now in the courtyard of the palace; and as some amends, he ordered me to bring to you these two hundred denarii of gold, praying you of your clemency to offer prayers for the repose of his soul."

She would have said more, but her grief stifled her words.

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The saint was greatly moved to pity, and freely forgave the offence with all his heart, but he refused to receive the horse or the money. Then the king, rising from his throne, placed himself as a suppliant before him, and prayed the bishop to receive both the one and the other to gratify that afflicted lady, and not to grieve all his court. The saint yielded to his request, promised the lady his most fervent prayers for the soul of the departed, and gave to all his benediction, leaving them this wise lesson: that eternal justice knows well how to cause punishment to correspond to crime.

A memorable example, which was confirmed by another that occurred on the same journey. On arriving in the territory of Trent one of the grooms observed in a meadow the other horse, which the Count Usinga had carried away on the first passage of the bishop; but he had become so squalid, lean, and diseased that he could hardly stand upon his feet. The servant called his master's attention to him, who said nothing, and commanded silence to his company until they should arrive at the gate of the city, where this same count, already aware of their return, came to meet the holy bishop; and kneeling at his feet, in a loud voice confessed his guilt, that against all justice he had taken the best palfrey to make him a race horse, but that hardly had he been led to his stable than not only had he become sore and diseased, but he had infected with contagion forty-two of his best horses, who had since died. By this he had been awakened to the gravity of his crime, of which he humbly asked pardon of the bishop and offered in the horse's stead two of his best coursers and two hundred golden ducats, that he might be pleased to obtain from God pardon for his evil deed. Corbinianus, smiling with a placid countenance, laid his hand upon his head in token of peace and friendship, and declined the offer of the horses and the money, contenting himself with giving him this caution, — that he who unjustly injures others much more seriously injures himself.

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A noble example of the confession of faith and martyrdom of a child. Written by Laurentius Surius.

"Out of the very mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies."

THE magnificent encomiums which St. Ambrose with the honey of his eloquence bestows upon the virgin St. Agnes, who suffered martyrdom at the age of thirteen years, may also be applied to the child of name unknown who at five years old became a martyr of Christ. That most cruel tyrant, Dunaan the Jew, having caused the noble champion of Christ, St. Areta, to be beheaded in Nagran, a city of Arabia, for confession of the faith, his soldiers signed their foreheads with his blood to exhort each other to martyrdom, when a matron, Omerita, who with her child in her arms had come to witness the spectacle, inspired by the example of the martyr's steadfastness, hurried to the spot among the rest, and dipping her finger in the blood, made the sign of the cross on her own forehead, and also on her child's, with that balsam of salvation, as if she desired to fortify both for the Christian combat of faith. Having thus fortified her spirit, without fear of the soldiers or executioners there present, she confessed Christ to be the Lord of Heaven and Earth, and accused the tyrant of barbarity, saying in a loud voice that the end of Dunaan the Jew would be evil, like that of Pharaoh the Egyptian.

The ministers of the barbarous king who were looking on hastened without delay to accuse the lady as a follower of the false religion, and as an offender against the royal majesty. Dunaan, without holding any examination or allowing her to make any defence, carried away by sudden anger, condemned her to be burnt alive; and they immediately prepared in the public square a catasta of dry wood all ready to be kindled, and the matron was arrested by two executioners, who tore her child from her arms, and tied her hands behind her, that she might be ready for the burning pile.

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In the meantime the child of five years old, taken from his mother, complained and entreated with many cries and tears, seeing her carried away with such cruel violence, and looked round with his eyes full of tears, as if seeking some one to whom he could turn, and when he saw the tyrant, who was seated on a high throne, a spectator of this wretched tragedy, he ran towards him, and kneeling down at his feet, asked in a broken voice aid and help for his unfortunate mother. He, contrary to his barbarous nature, stretched out his arms to raise him, and seated him on his knees, — for he was a most lovely and beautiful child, — and caressing him tenderly, he asked him if he would stay with his mother who was to be thrown into the fire, or with him seated on his throne.

"With my mother," replied the child, "with my mother; and I beg you either to deliver her from her torture, or at least to untie her hands, that she may take me in her arms, that with her I may suffer the martyrdom to which she has so often exhorted me." The king, who was astonished by such a speech from a child, asked him if he knew what the word martyrdom meant. "I know well," he replied; "it means to die for the love of Christ." "And who is this Christ?" asked the king; to which he answered: "Come with me to the church of the Christians, and I will show him to you, and also how lovely he is." At this answer the perfidious Jew was much disconcerted, but the faithful Christians much more comforted, seeing "The testimony of the Lord is sure, and giveth wisdom unto the simple." Having said this the child turned his eyes to the pile, and seeing his mother led towards the kindling flames, he said with tears: "Oh, let me run to embrace my mother!" "Not yet," replied the tyrant, "for she has deserted you. Stay with me, and I will give you many beautiful things, and sweet fruit." But the child, not with thoughtless childishness, but with mature consideration, replied: "I do not desire your gifts, but only my mother's embraces. I came to you, thinking you a pious Christian, to implore the release of my dearest mother; but I find you a cruel Jew. I renounce you and your caresses, and I prefer to be with my mother in her

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torment." Dunaan was more than ever astonished by the wisdom and firmness of the child, and began to try threats instead of promises, when one of the courtiers said: "Sire, this child has been brought up in his mother's arms; the royal majesty, which is awful, terrifies him. Let him be led to the queen, who will manage him gently by her caresses; thus he will without doubt appear like a child again, laying aside this insane anger, and yield himself cheerfully to the royal will." The child, who heard this, said: "What lady's gentleness and caresses? Neither caresses nor threats nor torture shall ever shake my resolution. Let me go to my mother. That is all I ask or desire."

But seeing that, by the command of the cruel tyrant, the executioners threw his mother bound into the burning pile, even he was kindled with sudden resentment in her defence, and conducted himself with an intrepidity wonderful in one so young; for being on the knees of Dunaan, he lifted his head suddenly and bit him severely on the face with a force beyond his years, for he was inspired with supernatural strength. The tyrant, feeling the bite, threw the child on the pavement, and ordered one of his chief officers to take him to his own house, where he should bring him up, and by either mildness or severity constrain him to deny the Christian faith and profess the Jewish belief. As the royal officer was leading him by the hand to his house, the child, suddenly seizing a favourable opportunity, escaped from him and ran swiftly to the pile; and inspired by supernatural wisdom, went to embrace his mother in the midst of the burning brands. Thus these innocent victims were sacrificed in each other's embraces, as a perfect holocaust to the Most High. Fortunate mother and more fortunate child, of whom we may say with St. Ambrose: "Devotion is above age, virtue above nature. Great is the power of that faith to which infancy bears testimony."

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Pious offerings the cause of a wonderful preservation. Written by Padre Petrus Cluniacensis.

"The offering was accepted, and food given to man."

TO prove the wonderful effect of holy offerings I cannot find a more admirable example than one which occurred in the diocese of Grenoble, by means of the singular piety of a most religious lady. A worker in metals, or miner, passed his days continually buried in a mine, seeking and digging the veins of minerals. One day in exploring the mine, he went beyond the other workmen into the very heart of the mountain, in search of some more valuable vein of metal, when he heard a mass of rock fall suddenly behind him that shut out the little light he had and entirely closed the way by which he entered; so that he found himself imprisoned in that gloomy tomb, buried before his death, without any road either to advance or retreat, but compelled to stay in the dungeon he had excavated. He shouted with all his strength, he beat against the rock, and worked on it with his tools; but all his efforts were vain, so that he despaired of life, and expected to die of hunger, from which indeed he suffered for some days.

In the meantime his wife, a most religious woman, finding he did not return home, and supposing him to have died from some accident, especially as the other miners, his companions, could give no account of him, determined to have prayers offered for the repose of his soul. For this purpose she began to send alms to a neighbouring monastery, in order that the devout brothers might pray for him, besides a candle, and also a large loaf of bread, to be distributed to the poor.

These pious offerings she continued to send every Monday for a whole year with great charity, especially for one of poor condition. Only one week, being much engaged in domestic affairs, she forgot to make her usual offerings, which were the life and the safety of her lost husband.

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At the end of a year, in the following spring, the workmen returned to the mine and began to dig with their spades and beat with their hammers the side of the mountain where the unfortunate man was buried; who, at the unexpected sound of workmen near him, raised his feeble voice to the best of his ability, asking help and pity for God's sake. The workmen arrested their labour in amazement, and stood listening intently with curious ears, and heard a human voice again imploring assistance; so that with redoubled diligence they began again to dig and break the side of the rock, until by great labour and perseverance they made an opening and reached the cave. There by the light of a lantern they discovered their companion, buried there since the last year. They were in great astonishment at finding him alive and well; and after tenderly embracing him, lifted him out and took him to his house, like a dead man raised from the grave. His wife's joy and surprise were so great that they nearly proved fatal; and all the neighbours, at the tidings of this prodigy, hurried to see him, and to enquire how he had been able to support life so long without food in a subterranean cavern; and he related to them that after he had been buried a few days, when he was nearly dead with famine, there appeared suddenly before his eyes a youth of beautiful appearance, with a candle in his hand, which he fastened to the side of the rock, and with a large loaf of bread, which he laid at his feet, and encouraged him to refresh himself, and to keep up his heart. And when, as it appeared to him about eight days had passed, and the light and the food had failed, he returned with another candle and a similar loaf of bread, exhorting him to trust in divine aid. And every eight days through all the past year he had always brought him the same food to eat and the same light to see, only one week he failed to bring the usual supply, causing him much anxiety; but after that he always continued to bring the accustomed refreshment regularly. "Aid me," he concluded, "in thanking divine Providence for so many benefits." On hearing this, his wife and all the bystanders saw plainly that this wonderful provision was the

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same candle and the same loaf which she offered every eight days, and which his guardian angel had conveyed to him in his horrible tomb; and when his supply failed, it was exactly at the time when she had forgotten to make her accustomed offering; so they were all compelled to give faith to the miracle, blessings to God, and praise to the piety of this godly woman.

The fame of this wonder spread through all the kingdom, and as the historian concludes: "All who glorify the Lord have already seen more than the light, and how much will avail a sacrifice offered to Him."

The faithful piety of a lady converts a king and a kingdom to the true faith. Written by Saint Gregorius Turonensis.

"The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife."

A MORE glorious and admirable conversion and holy baptism is not recorded than that of the king Clovis and of the kingdom of France. This king had sent an embassy to Gondebald, King of Burgundy, on certain state affairs. On their return the ambassadors informed Clovis that they had seen Clotilde, the niece of the king, a princess of beauty so rare and virtue so excellent that she was a marvel to behold.

The king, who was then thinking of contracting a marriage, became disposed to select her for his wife, especially as he hoped to increase his territory by the alliance; and with this intention he summoned his confidant Aurelian, and sent him to Clotilde with a nuptial ring and other precious gifts. This messenger, knowing that Gondebald, suspicious and jealous on account of his kingdom, kept his niece and heiress in such strict custody that he never permitted her to speak with any stranger, or to appear in public except at church, where she was accustomed to distribute charity to the poor, acted a wise part. He clothed himself with a

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ragged dress and stationed himself at the door of the cathedral among the beggars, waiting until the princess should pass out; who, in bestowing charity on the poor, gave a large sum to the pretended beggar, who, on receiving it, raised gently the sleeve of the vest which covered her hand and kissed it with great reverence. Clotilde blushed at this and took notice of his appearance, and that he had the bearing of nobility. On her return to the palace she sent for him and reproved him for his audacity, when he revealed to her who he was, and that he had been sent by Clovis, King of France, who, knowing her admirable qualities, ardently desired her hand; and that he had assumed the dress of a beggar to be enabled to speak to her secretly on the subject, without arousing the jealousy of her uncle; that if she would give her consent she would become the greatest queen in the world; and in conclusion he offered her the nuptial ring as an earnest or pledge of the desire of his master. But the princess Clotilde replied: "It is not lawful for a Christian princess to marry an idolatrous king; neither would I do so to become queen of all the world." To which Aurelian answered: "Madam, let not the difference of religion give you anxiety, for my king is not so much attached to his faith that he will not abandon it for your love and favour." "If this be so," replied she, "I on my part do not refuse the offer, and I accept the ring, recommending you to secrecy."

Having thus secretly accomplished his embassy, Aurelian returned to Clovis and informed him of its happy success; and he was immediately sent back with great state to ask the princess in marriage of Gondebald, and to promise Clotilde to renounce paganism in due time. Gondebald was at first surprised by the demand and disposed to refuse it; but on reflection, fearing to exasperate a powerful king needlessly and to bring the armies of France into Burgundy, he finally gave his consent. The tidings having been at once despatched to Paris, Clovis ordered a magnificent train of knights and ladies to go to receive and conduct home the bride, who made her appearance in the king's presence like

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a sun attended by many stars; and after saluting him reverently, her first words were: "Sire, I am at the height of felicity if, according to your royal promise, you do me the favour to embrace the faith of Jesus Christ, the Lord of Heaven and Earth." "Madam," replied he, "you shall not be without this satisfaction if you will grant me time and opportunity to mature so serious an undertaking." But the king, with these fair promises, delayed from month to month, and made no progress towards their fulfilment, it being so ordained by divine Providence in order that the most religious queen might by frequent prayers implore the celestial goodness to grant him more light and induce the heart of her husband by frequent exhortations to correspond to the divine illumination; and at last, in God's good time, her prayers were granted, for the king, finding himself in a desperate battle with the Suevi, made a vow to the God of the Christians that if He would concede to him a happy victory he would immediately embrace the Christian faith; and having obtained it, he at once sent to the queen the welcome news that he was preparing himself for the holy baptism.

She, without delay, sent the tidings to Remigio, Bishop of Rheims, who promptly offered himself to instruct Clovis in the articles of faith; in the course of which instruction it happened that when St. Remigio explained to him the mystery of the Passion, he, carried away by generous indignation, laid his hand on his sword, saying: "If I had been present with my soldiers where such barbarity was committed against my Lord, I would have revenged him suitably." The holy prelate subdued this warlike spirit by explaining that the Saviour of the world had voluntarily chosen thus to suffer in satisfaction of our sins; and the king, in penitence for his own, laid aside his crown and his royal mantle, and sprinkling his head with ashes, invoked with devout prayers divine mercy.

After these instructions the preparations for the baptismal ceremony were made ready for the solemn vigil of Easter. The road from the royal palace to the church of St. Peter was adorned with beautiful tapestries, and the church was

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also hung with precious embroideries, illuminated with great candles, and sprinkled with costly perfumes. The king and queen were seated on a majestic throne, from which he rose and placed himself before St. Remigio, who pronounced those celebrated words: "Bow thy neck, O Sicambro, to the yoke of Jesus Christ. Adore that cross which thou has burned, and burn those idols which thou hast adored." Then Clovis, repeating in a loud voice the confession of faith, received holy baptism in the name of the august Trinity; and with him were baptized more than three thousand knights, captains, and soldiers, so that in a short time all France became Christian, seeing that the king in all parts of his kingdom burnt the idols and planted crosses.

The king immediately devoted himself to pious undertakings worthy of the religion he had professed, and sent to the high pontiff Ormisda a gift of a precious crown, that it might be suspended at the altar of St. Peter in token of his subjection to the prince of the apostles.

Clotilde was enrolled in the catalogue of saints, having like Esther and Judith of old delivered her people from the services of idols, and was called in all France the light, the glory, and the pride of her people.

The wisdom of the great instructed by the simplicity of the poor. Written by Henricus Gran Germanus.

"God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the wise."

THE truth of that celebrated proverb, "Wisdom often wears an old and thin cloak," is well proved by the wise lessons which two simple men gave to two great ecclesiastics.

Henry, Cardinal of Albano, of the Cistercian order, was sent by Clement the Third to Germany to the Emperor Frederic to declare and promote a general crusade against the Saracens; and he took in his train on the journey some of his Cistercian monks, and as they were journeying lei-

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surely one morning, requested of them some spiritual discourse to enliven the way. The others excusing themselves, one of the principal ones among them, moved by some secret inspiration, made a sign to the cardinal that he should order some discourse from a certain simple monk, rich in wisdom but poor in spirit. He, after many apologies for his ignorance, and that he was not a man worthy to open his mouth in the presence of people so learned, but constrained by the command to speak with all liberty, began in simplicity to propound the things of the spirit. Afterwards in the progress of his discourse, the Holy Spirit directing his words, he began to praise temperance and reprove luxury. "When," said he, "we shall be dead and conducted to the gate of heaven, our holy father Benedict will come to meet us, and seeing his true monks ill-fed and ill-clothed, he will recognize them, and will welcome them gladly, and without delay will introduce them to the joys of paradise. But if he shall see the Cardinal Henry richly clothed and daintily fed, he will enquire who he may be. He without doubt will reply that he also is a Cistercian monk. But the saint, looking at the appearance of his face and the cloth of his dress, will reply, 'Where then is the pallor of my monks, the poverty of their robes, the emaciation of fasting?' And if he shall still persist in saying that he has made the profession of the order, Benedict, to ascertain the truth of his declaration, will give this order to his servants: 'Look within Henry and see with what he has been fed. If you find herbs, fish, and salads, the proper food of my monks, he may be admitted to the kingdom of heaven as my lawful disciple; but if on the contrary you discover delicate meats, chickens, birds, and ragouts, he must be shut out; for according to my rule he has not observed his profession.'"

Having said this with his eyes cast down, he turned to the cardinal and added with modest reverence: "Monsignore, what says your own heart? Will there be found in your lordship the true countersign by which you may claim to be introduced by the holy father into heaven to enjoy the reward of his true sons? I can but trust it is so."

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The cardinal smiled with much benevolence and commended the wise simplicity of the good monk, saying: "Never man spake like this man."

Thus it may be seen that the Lord speaks by the simple. "His secret is with the righteous."

Nor was this exhortation without profit, for from that time Henry moderated the splendour of his table, which, though fitting for a prince of the holy church, was perhaps too great for a member of a religious order.

More pleasing will be the following example. An archbishop of Cologne and elector of the empire, arrayed half as an ecclesiastic and half as a soldier, with a cross on his breast and a sword at his side, accompanied by soldiers instead of priests, rode towards his kingdom at the head of a squadron of cavalry. He chanced to pass near a field where a husbandman, one of the good old time, was cultivating the land; who stopped his work, and, raising his eyes, fixed them full of curiosity on the archbishop, and with an expression of great wonder stood with open mouth looking at him steadily in amazement. The elector, seeing these signs of astonishment, stopped his horse and called the labourer courteously to come to him, and with a pleasant countenance said to him: "Good man, I have a curiosity to ask you something. Tell me why on my approach you left your plough and stood in wonder, looking at me intently with open eyes." To which the husbandman with candid simplicity answered: "My Lord, since you so command I will explain my thoughts and my wonder freely. When I looked at you I thought in my heart whether St. Martin when he was a bishop marched in this guise, with armour on his back, a helmet on his head, and surrounded by soldiers." The archbishop, changing colour, said to him graciously: "There is this great difference between St. Martin and me: he was only a bishop and had only spiritual dominion; I, besides the bishopric, possess a secular lordship. As a bishop I hold the crosier, and as a prince the sceptre. To-day you see me lead my armed squadrons as a captain, and on Sunday, if you come to the cathedral, you

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will see me as a bishop, exercising my sacred duties at the altar."

The poor man appeared satisfied by this explanation, but before the archbishop rode on he smiled, and with timid respect added: "If your lordship will give me leave, I have one more question to ask." "Speak frankly," replied he, "and fear nothing." "My lord," said the husbandman, "I wish to know if by misfortune — which may God forbid — the temporal prince of whom you have told me should go to hell, where would the spiritual bishop go of whom you have spoken?" To this sage demand the archbishop could only reply by an expression of wonder and confusion, and giving his courser the spur, went on his way softly, revolving in his mind the admonition which the Holy Spirit had given him by the simplicity of that rustic; and he endeavoured thenceforward so to guide the secular affairs of his principality that they should not interfere with the spiritual ones of his archbishopric.

The wiles of Satan revealed in a wonderful vision. Written by Henricus Gran Germanus.

"He sitteth in the lurking-places of the villages."

HISTORY does not reveal the memorable name of that holy preacher who received from God a wonderful gift of converting misers and usurers. He was once preaching with great energy against usury when by chance, or to speak more truly, by the merciful guidance of divine Providence, a covetous man infected with this plague entered the church, and as he passed along, hearing him plainly declare that by usurious dealings the soul was sold to the infernal tyrant and for a small price, he went away with a sharp thorn in his heart.

Remorse of conscience lay heavy on his soul; on one hand it grieved him to restore his ill-acquired riches, and on the other he feared to call down on himself eternal punish-

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ment. He could not decide what part to take, when a dangerous fever which attacked him determined him to follow wise counsels.

He sent for the preacher to his bedside, and with many sighs and tears confessed to him that the immense wealth which he possessed had been acquired by fraudulent usury. The preaching he had heard had opened his eyes to the gravity of his sin, and fearing greatly he should fall into condemnation, he asked how he should escape from such fearful danger.

The preacher, having learned his alarming condition, was for a time irresolute. He was disposed to tell the sick man frankly the necessity of making due restitution, but he feared thereby to drive him to desperation, knowing the resolution he would require to strip himself of his riches and reduce himself to beggary; when the sick man, seeing the perplexity of his counsellor, added earnestly: "What do you fear? Oh father, tell me your opinion freely. I am ready to do anything, however painful or difficult, even though I should be reduced to misery." Then the preacher told him plainly: "I can suggest no safe way for your escape from the peril of damnation except that you should name four persons of integrity, and should transfer to them your ill-gotten wealth, under an obligation to make a due restitution of it to your creditors; and that you yourself, sick and poor, should be carried to the hospital to live on charity until your death, which my heart reveals to me is not far off." The Lord, who sought the salvation of this soul, moved the contrite penitent to follow this salutary counsel. He summoned to his bedside four of his confidential friends, and with urgent entreaties requested them to take all his wealth and return it to those whom he had defrauded by his usury; and having renounced all he possessed, he was transferred to the public hospital, resolved to die in beggary, or to live on charity if his life should be spared — to such contrition had this penitent been brought by divine grace.

The holy priest returned to his convent thankful for this signal conversion, and the following night he had a wonder-

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ful vision. He saw on one side a demon in the form of a youth, who with many groans and sighs was expressing his despair; and on the other side another demon in the shape of an old man with white hair and long beard, who mocked the youth, saying: "Oh fool, what is the meaning of these tears and sighs? What have you to complain of?" To which the other replied: "I have but too much cause for tears. Do you not know that I have just lost the soul of that usurer, which by my exertions I have kept so long in my power? And now almost at the day of his death, when I thought to offer him as a gift to Lucifer, I see him torn from my hands by the restitution he has ordered. What excuse can I make to our captain, who has designated me for the acquisition of that soul?" Then the other demon replied: "How true it is that practical wisdom belongs to the old and not to the young. You weep, simpleton, when you ought to laugh. Cease your complaints, wipe your eyes, and rejoice because you have gained more than you have lost. Who would not willingly give one for four? You have lost one soul and gained four. Has not the usurer named four executors in his will to make restitution for him? You think perhaps they will make it? I know by my long experience that they will certainly fail to do so, and behold all four are in your net, to be drawn into the abyss. Make ready for them your crafts and stratagems. You must so contrive, that they shall begin to spend the money committed to their fidelity for restitution in their own houses and for their own use; and it will be a miracle if they ever so much as think of restoring it to the creditors. They would sooner part with the skin from their bodies than strip themselves of the money of others when it is once incorporated with their own. See then with what multiplied booty you can present yourself to your infernal prince. What applause and what thanks will you receive, offering him four for one!"

The pious preacher, who was rapt in ecstasy, saw with open eyes the two demons, and plainly heard their evil discourse, and came to himself full of amazement.

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Not only did he relate this astonishing vision to the four executors, but declared it with great zeal from the pulpit, often repeating the great danger of eternal ruin to which those expose themselves who assume the charge of executors of wills and bequests.

The history relates that the sick man died truly penitent and contrite, with much hope in his death, having fulfilled the part of sincere repentance, to which God promises the glory of the blessed. There is no mention made of the four executors, whether they faithfully satisfied the creditors, or whether they applied the property of others to their own use; so that it remains doubtful whether the crafty demon foretold the truth, and the other demon gained four souls by the loss of one; but the history concludes with this wise advice: "Let the executors of wills beware of losing their own souls for the goods of others, and of selling for so poor a price eternal blessedness."

Sanctity the ruler and tamer of the most savage beasts. Written by Henricus Gran Germanus.

"And I will give peace, I will rid evil beasts out of the land."

NOT only for the integrity of his life, but also for his power and lordship over every species of animal, does the padre San Francesco merit the name of a new and innocent Adam. I will relate only one example of it. The city of Gubbio was much molested by a wolf of enormous size and great ferocity, who prowled about the walls attacking and tearing in pieces not only animals but even men. No way was found of defence or deliverance from his dangerous attacks, though the citizens had gone out armed in search of him; so that they were in great fear, not daring to cultivate the fields, to their great loss. The seraphic padre was then in that city, and pitying them for such a misfortune, he determined to go himself to seek the animal, though the citizens entreated him most earnestly not to expose himself

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to such manifest danger of being assailed and devoured by the formidable beast. But he, trusting in divine Providence, without shield or arms, defended only by the sign of the cross, passed out with his companions. A great part of the citizens stationed themselves on the towers and battlements of the walls with beating hearts, fearing the loss and destruction of the saint; when the wolf, howling and showing his teeth, came towards him, but he, constant and intrepid, met him with the sign of the cross, at which he stopped, closed his jaws, and became timid as a hare; then he called him to approach, saying: "Brother wolf, come here in the name of Jesus Christ, and lay aside your ferocity." Wonderful sight! Immediately the cruel beast dropped his lofty head like a gentle lamb, and came to prostrate himself at the feet of Francesco, who, extending his finger towards him, said: "You are too voracious and murderous a beast. Not content with tearing animals to pieces, you make prey of men created in God's likeness. What ruin have you brought on this place! What punishment does your ferocity deserve! The whole city should go out armed to put you to a cruel death. But I have come as a peacemaker to make a contract between you and the citizens. If you promise me to molest them no more, I will undertake that they will forgive your past offences, and will lay aside their anger and determination to persecute you to your death."

The wolf, who heard him with attentive ears, bent his head from time to time, wagged his tail, and made motions with his paws, appearing to approve of this proposal of peace. The saint added: "If you are disposed to make this compact, I will give my word that these citizens will provide well for you at their expense, so that you shall not suffer from hunger, which heretofore has compelled you to make such havoc of animals and men; but beware that you do not again satisfy yourself by injuring them. Do you promise me this in good faith?" In token of the fidelity of his promise the wild beast bowed his head three times, and Francesco said: "It is well, but you must give me a more sure sign. Behold, I offer you my hand." Then the wolf, as if capable

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of reason, lifted his paw and laid it in the saint's hand, to the great wonder of all the spectators, who from a safe distance were watching this prodigy. After which the seraphic padre concluded: "Now, friend wolf, as these conditions please you, enter with me into the city to ratify the compact with the people. Fear nothing. I assure you in the name of the Most High that no one shall touch a hair of your head, but you shall be well and courteously received." So saying he entered the gate, and behind him walked the beast humbly and gently, the people following them from all parts to the public square, men and women, small and great, attracted by the wonderful tidings of such a marvel.

Here the holy father preached a sermon to the people, showing them that God had justly permitted these ravages of wild beasts as a punishment of the sins they had committed, and that they were but the foretastes of greater torments which sinners would undergo in the world to come. "If the cruel voracity of one single wolf was so formidable," he said, "how much more insatiable is the rage of infernal monsters, who make a perpetual prey of both bodies and souls. Seek then to make a full repentance, that you may escape from the jaws of those beasts, as you are now delivered from the ravages of this."

At the conclusion of his sermon he said: "This wolf, oh citizens, has promised me, and given a safe pledge of his word, to make with you a lasting peace that in time to come he will attack neither the men nor the animals of this city; that he will live among you as a harmless lamb, if you agree to provide him with sufficient food that he shall not die of hunger. Do you accept these terms? I offer myself as a guarantee of his good faith." All with one voice replied "Yes," that they agreed to the condition of feeding him regularly and sufficiently. Then he turned to the wolf. "Do you understand," he said, "with how much goodness the citizens, forgetting the injury you have done them, seek to provide for your need, and will you be faithful in respecting your promise not to wrong them?" At which the beast, publicly testifying his consent, kneeled down and bowed his

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head, and the saint added: "Now let us publicly ratify the promise with the same token you gave me outside the wall."

The wolf a second time promptly raised his paw, and extending it amicably, placed it in the hand of the holy father, who with a loud voice proclaimed: "Now let a lasting peace be established between you."

At this strange sight the city broke forth in exclamations of joy, blessing the divine goodness, and praising their saintly deliverer. The wolf from that day forward lived peaceably in the city. He went about the houses like a favourite dog, seeking and everywhere receiving food; he was a playmate for the children, who coaxed him without fear; he became so gentle and familiar with the dogs that they never even barked at him; indeed he became so tame and peaceful that to the wolf who was so obedient to San Francesco might be applied that which the poet said in praise of the lions who were so tame and respectful to Cæsar, — "The lions recognize their master."

Threats and promises convert sinners. Written by Padre Nicolaus Orlandinus.

"Preach the word, reprove, exhort with all long-suffering."

GREAT prudence is needed by apostolic men to be able, according to time and place, to effect the conversion of sinners by severity or gentleness, the wounds of the soul being like those of the body, some of which are cured by healing and others by corrosive medicines. Of these remedies two of the first companions of St. Ignatius knew well how to take advantage. The Padre Peter le Favre, whom San Francesco di Sales calls the beato, had much skill in converting many and great sinners; so that he was called the broom of the house of God, because he went here and there cleaning the earth in cleansing sinners from their impurities. He was once travelling between the confines of Florence and Siena in the depth of winter, and found himself

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overtaken by night. Not knowing where to turn, and seeing by the roadside a little country inn, he directed his steps towards it, and asked a lodging of the peasant, who received him courteously. Shivering with cold, he seated himself near the small fire to warm himself, when a company of sixteen brigands arrived unexpectedly with a great tumult, on their way to or from some assassination; and being determined with or without leave to spend the night there for greater safety, they immediately called for supper, and the poor countryman was compelled either by love or fear to place his best on the table. Hardly were they seated around it than, according to the custom of that class of men, they began a conversation filled with every evil, as if they were filthy animals on two legs. Peter, who was seated in a corner, remained silent, with his eyes bent on the ground with an expression of compassion. At last one of the sixteen, more shameless than the others, fixed his eyes on him, and addressing him with low rudeness, "How now," said he, "what are you doing here? Are you dumb, or do you pretend to be deaf to our discourse? Why do you not speak? What are you thinking of in such astonishment?"

Then Peter replied: "I am thinking how wretched is the mirth of wicked sinners, and from this little fire here before me I passed to the idea of the immense flames of hell, in which the guilty will be forever tormented. I cannot understand how those can laugh, jest, and talk thus who know themselves to be the enemies of God, who not only this night, but this instant, can cast them into eternal fire, when it is certain that if they were in the hands of human justice, which could condemn them to the brief death of the gallows, the mirth would die in their hearts and the words upon their lips. Ah! think a moment on the dreadful state in which I fear some of you may be already condemned if judged at present to eternal torments." "What language is this?" replied the other. "Are you a prophet or a gypsy that you tell us such evil fortune?" "These are not," replied Peter, "my prophecies or prognostications, but the words of the gospel of unchanging truth. God declares, 'He shall con-

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sume away in his iniquity'; " and all on fire with zeal, though ordinarily full of gentleness, he went on to show that " it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." " How much is that God to be feared who holds our life in His hand, and by His will alone can at any moment cut it short and cast us into perpetual damnation." Then these wretched men, moved by a good spirit, rose from the table and came and placed themselves in a circle around the servant of God, who went on to describe vividly the greatness of their danger, the unhappy death which at every moment threatened them, and the eternal flames of hell over which they hung suspended; so that the Lord working in them an admirable miracle by His grace, all sixteen, contrite and repentant, resolved to change their lives and occupation.

They desired not to depart from that place until they had first given a satisfactory proof of their conversion. Throwing away their arms, they came a little apart, one after another, and kneeling at the feet of the padre, made a full confession of their sins, with repentance in their hearts and tears in their eyes.

Thus, he in hearing and they in confessing, passed that night, to him one of spiritual consolation, to them the beginning of eternal salvation. Blessed was that little fire of Peter which served to illuminate the darkness of their minds and to soften the hardness of their hearts.

Similar in effect, but different and more gracious in the manner of its accomplishment, was the following event, the work not of fear but of kindness. The Padre Nicolò Bobadilea, another companion of St. Ignatio, a man full of apostolic zeal, who had been many times in peril of his life for the Catholic faith, was sent from Naples to Valtellina to extinguish certain sparks of heresy; and on his way he met a party of brigands who were on the road for plunder. When he saw them approaching him, as he understood music, he began to sing sweetly some spiritual songs, and those fierce spirits being attracted by them, joined themselves to his company, as the wild beasts were subdued by the singing and playing of Orpheus.

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He, seeing them so mild and softened, resolved to salute them with benevolence, and interrupting his singing, said graciously: "You are welcome; may you be happy. It seems to me your life is very similar to that which Christ the Saviour led here on earth."

They smiled at this speech, and he added that he could show them plainly the truth of his words, and began: "First, Christ conversed with sinners, and each of you may see that with such is your conversation. Second, Christ abode in the desert and passed by mountains and valleys, and you take your journeys in similar places. Third, Christ had no house wherein to dwell, nor bed on which He might rest His head; you wander without homes or shelter where you might repose. Fourth, Christ came to make war on the world, as He himself said: 'I am not come to bring peace on earth, but the sword,' and you thus in arms show your warlike spirit. Fifth, Christ's directions to His followers were that to him who should take their coat they should give their cloak also, and you perhaps would not wish this otherwise? Sixth, Christ warned and threatened the rich, 'Woe unto you, rich men;' and against whom do you set yourselves if not the wealthy? Seventh, Christ suffered abuse and persecution; and are you not abused and persecuted by all men? Eighth, Christ was often in danger of being taken by His enemies if He had not concealed himself; and you, how often have you been in similar peril, if you have not saved yourselves by secret flight? Ninth, the people cried out against Christ, 'Take him, take him, and crucify him'; and have you not often heard these words, accompanied with many threats and imprecations, — 'To the gallows'? Tenth, Christ on the cross showed to no one more mercy and kindness than to a thief on whom He conferred paradise, saying: 'To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise'; this also He promised to you as his dear friends, if like him you turn to Him with all your hearts and detest your sins with true repentance and reformation."

What would you expect, my reader, from this acute and persuasive preaching, — a wonder of divine mercy which

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penetrated the hearts of those brigands so profoundly by God's grace that they were melted and softened to penitence? They asked if he had authority to grant them absolution from their sins, as they would prefer confessing them to him; and he replied that he had, and from a preacher becoming a confessor, he stationed himself under an oak tree, recommending them to take some time for preparation. All, from the captain of the band to his last follower, came to the feet of the padre to cleanse their souls from their sins — God knows how many. I cannot say which was greater on this occasion, the deep contrition of the penitents or the cheerful welcome of the confessor who encouraged and inspired them. He needed no little time to hear the confessions of so many who had been so long unconfessed. After having exhorted them to persevere after so good a beginning, he took leave of them, after embracing each of them, with the words of Christ — "Go and sin no more." So much avails a wise and pleasant affability and graciousness of speech, in fitting time and place, to conciliate the most ferocious souls.

Tully says truly in the second of his Officii: "It is not easy to say how much minds may be soothed by patience and affability of speech."

And the apostle admonishes us: "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

Humble worth honoured by the King of Kings. Written by Laurentius Surius.

"Behold how greatly are the friends of God honoured."

IT would be difficult to find in ecclesiastical history one more humble and ignorant, and at the same time more honoured by the great and more filled with wisdom, than the Beato Egidio, a simple lay brother. He was so destitute of human learning that he hardly knew how to read, and yet

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he had his mind so filled with heavenly wisdom that he surpassed the most learned doctors. The deep mysteries of God had been so manifested to him that he was once heard to say: "If I were to say mass I should not say, 'I believe in God,' but 'I know God, Maker of Heaven and Earth'" — as if he had no need of faith who had such perfect knowledge of God. In his meditations he was wonderfully favoured by the Holy Spirit in such a manner that hardly had he bent his knees than he was rapt in lofty contemplations, especially in considering the glory of heaven — and not only in meditation, but when he was heard to speak of paradise, so that it was known in all Perugia; and when he went through the city asking alms the children would run after him calling, "Fra Egidio! Paradise! Paradise!"

He was honoured by both ecclesiastical princes and secular sovereigns. His fame spread through the kingdoms of Spain and France, and the holy King Louis the Ninth sought to visit him, and resolved to make a pilgrimage to Rome to revere the footsteps of the apostles, and to visit Perugia on his way. He arrived at the convent in his pilgrim's dress with only two of his courtiers, that he might not be recognized as a king, and knocked at the door, and said to the porter that he came to see and speak with Fra Egidio. The porter went to the choir and told him that a certain pilgrim stood at the door waiting for him. He immediately knew that it was the holy king of France, and ran in haste to meet him; and when they met they looked at each other with friendly eyes, and with a cordial embrace kissed each other on the forehead, as if they had been old friends between whom there was a long and dear friendship. They remained some time together, but neither of them spoke, and at last they parted and took leave of each other in silence. Fra Egidio returned to his cell, and the brothers asking him who that pilgrim was whom he had welcomed with such unusual affection, he replied that he was the Christian king of France, Louis; hearing this the brothers were frightened and grieved, and accused him of being rude and rustic, that to so great a king, come so far to visit him, he had not

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spoken a single word of respect. "Do not trouble yourselves," said he, "for though our tongues were silent our hearts spoke, and we were illuminated by such light from heaven that the heart of one was open to the other and its affection well understood. Ah! if you but knew the goodwill which we exchanged. But human tongues cannot express divine sentiments. I know well that the holy king has gone away with as much consolation as human heart can contain." Thus these two great servants of God spoke in the manner of angels, who without words understand the sentiments of the heart.

Having seen with how much wisdom the simplicity of Fra Egidio was endowed, it will be well to preserve some of his wise sayings.

Two of the most wealthy cardinals of the sacred college, having heard of his excellence and the efficacy of his prayers, went to visit him and to request his frequent prayers for themselves, to which he answered: "What need, most reverend fathers, can you have of my poor prayers, since you can pray so much better for yourselves, having more faith and hope than I — virtues especially powerful to prevail?" "How," replied they, "can we have more of those virtues than you who are a monk?" "How?" said he. "Do me the favour to tell me if you do not believe and hope to be saved?" "Certainly," they replied. "Behold then," added the saint, "how have you more faith and hope than I? For you from so great riches, so many honours and pleasures hope and believe to go to the joys of paradise, and I from so much want, so many humiliations and miseries fear to pass to the punishment of hell."

With such discourse he took leave of them, they becoming more fearful and careful of their salvation.

A devout gentleman asked him if divine grace could be obtained and preserved in the world. "Why not?" replied the servant of God. "It can, indeed it can, but I would rather have one degree of grace in the cloister than ten in the world." And as he saw he was surprised, he went on: "In the cloister grace easily is preserved and increased, there

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are so many good examples, so many holy exhortations, so many defences from dangers; while in the world grace increases not without difficulty and is easily lost, so great are its scandals, envyings, and temptations. Let him who will, sail on unstable seas; I will walk on solid ground."

Fra Gratiano, the intimate friend of Egidio, asked him how he could best employ the talents which God had given him, whether in preaching to the people, in hearing confessions, or in other services of his order. Egidio, having thought some time in silence, replied: "You can do nothing more acceptable to God than to hang yourself by the neck." The frate frowned at such counsel, but he added: "He who is suspended in the air is detached from the earth and raised towards heaven; so should you be spiritually. Keep yourself with pure intentions above worldly interests and raised to celestial ones, and observing this rule, whatever you do will be acceptable to God."

Not very different were certain admirable sayings which he often repeated to his confidential friends: "If you desire to see well and clearly, close your eyes and become blind; if you will hear perfectly, stop your ears and become deaf; if you will speak wisely, restrain your tongue and be mute; if you will live well, fast; if you will be rich, cast away riches; if you will rise to great honours, place yourselves at the feet of all. He who seeks to attain to God must first depart from himself. This is true wisdom, but understood by few; let him who can receive it, but may I receive it myself."

Finally, I will briefly record here some of his more profitable sayings. First, "Our flesh is the most valiant soldier that Lucifer has in his warfare against us. He who conquers only himself conquers all his enemies." Second, "He who obeys well offers good prayers. One should leave a conversation with a visible angel to run at the voice of his superior; a little work done in obedience to his command is worth more than many great undertakings of one's own will." Third, "He who seeks to fly from the struggle with temptations seeks to fly from the crown of glory. To hold

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a fortress in time of peace does not merit the same reward that is due to its defence in the assaults of war." Fourth, "He who revenges an injury makes evil of good, and he who forgives it makes good of evil. It is more to the glory of God and more praiseworthy to pass over an offence than to feed a hundred poor families and to fast a hundred Saturdays." Fifth, "It is not greater wisdom to know how to speak well than to know how to keep silence well. It would be desirable for many that they should have necks like a crane, that their words, having a long distance to pass from their minds, should come slowly and with more consideration." Sixth, To an ecclesiastic who asked him if it was better to give good counsels or to perform good works he answered: "Tell me, is it more useful to go on pilgrimage to visit the holy sepulchre or to show the way to others?" Seventh, To a monk who spent much time in various occupations and friendships he said in his ear: "One to one;" and the monk not understanding his meaning, he added: "A single heart to a single God."

Such were the teachings of this ignorant, wise man, by which he acquired such renown that he was consulted by great sages as an oracle of celestial wisdom.

The hands which dispense favours gain hearts. Written by Laurentius Surius.

"He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed, for he giveth of his bread to the poor."

IN the sacred Canticles it is said: "His hands are as gold rings set with hyacinths," which means that his hands are full so that they are rounded and cannot be closed, and from them favours flow freely which are symbolled by hyacinths, which are both flowers of admirable beauty and jewels of great value, by which hearts are gained.

Such praise may worthily be applied to the liberal hands of St. Edward, King of England, who for his beneficence was

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the pride and delight of his kingdom. It would need too much time to relate all the examples of his liberality, but I will record only two or three of the most memorable. King Ethelred, his father, on account of the war with the Danes, had imposed extraordinary taxes on his vassals, and had exacted besides a certain sum of money yearly for the maintenance of an army to defend the kingdom. The war being over the tax remained unrepealed and incorporated, as it were, in the finances, so that the royal taxgatherers continued the exaction. One day, when the treasurer had presented to Edward a great sum in ready money thus collected, the king saw the devil on the pile of money dancing and singing, kissing and caressing it, as something that gave him much pleasure; by which he comprehended that the collection of a tax which afforded so much satisfaction to Satan could not be pleasing to God; and he immediately commanded that all that money to the last penny should be returned to his subjects by the taxgatherers, with the absolute order that it should never again be collected, as taxes imposed for unusual necessities should cease with the occasion which called for them. This royal liberality gained the hearts of his subjects to such a degree that they would willingly have laid down their lives for him.

The following example will appear more liberal because it was bestowed where it was ill-deserved. Edward, once lying on his bed to rest at noontime, Ugolino his treasurer came and deposited a large sum of money, which was part of the royal income, in a chest of the exchequer which was in the chamber where the king was reposing. When he perceived the king he went away hastily that he might not disturb his slumbers. Near by was a person of the court who was tempted by the opportunity and by the supposed sleep of the king to come and provide himself with money. So he went softly to the chest, and opening it lightly, dexterously took a large sum and went away in silence; and seeing that fortune gave him an opportunity to acquire a richer booty, he returned again and made a larger theft, filling his bosom with gold and silver; and at last, the

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proverb being true which says, "With money the love of money increases," not being satisfied with these two robberies, he risked returning the third time to take possession of the larger sum which he had reluctantly left in the chest. But the king, who while pretending to sleep had watched the robberies attentively, raised his voice, saying: "Beware of being too indiscreet. Content yourself with what you have stolen these two times, and go in God's name; otherwise the treasurer may return and find you with the money in your hand, and then look well to yourself." At these words, though spoken benevolently, the thief was half dead with terror, and disappeared in haste; and hardly had he gone than the treasurer came back, doubting if he had locked the chest safely; and finding it open and the money sensibly diminished, he gave vent to his grief in cries and lamentations, and was distressed beyond measure, so that the king, hearing him and feigning to know nothing, asked the cause of his sorrow and outcries. The minister answered that a great sum of money had been stolen, and he replied: "Say nothing, and do not afflict yourself; he has taken advantage of the good opportunity which makes a man a thief. He who has stolen the money needs it perhaps more than ourselves, and so let him enjoy it, and we will wish him good of it; that which is left is enough for us." Oh, the greatness of a liberal soul which gives his own even to one who in the place of a gift deserved punishment!

But perhaps even this generosity will not appear so singular as the following. He had a devoted affection for the Apostle St. John, and always gave abundantly to any one who asked charity in his name; and it happened that a pilgrim once asked an alms for his sake, and as he had no money with him, he drew a precious ring from his finger and gave it to the pilgrim, who looked at it with wonder. This charity was well-pleasing to the apostle — for it was he who had asked charity under this disguise — and he rewarded it miraculously; for two English pilgrims having gone to Jerusalem to pray at the holy sepulchre, he came to meet them at evening, and conducted them to an inn, where

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they slept comfortably. The next morning in taking leave of them he said: "I am the Apostle John and love your king tenderly; salute him in my name, and take him this gold ring which he gave me when I asked charity of him in the garb of a pilgrim; return it to him from me, and let it be to him an annunciation that his life draws near its close, and that I will be near him in his last hour to receive his soul and lead him to the marriage supper of the Lamb to receive his reward." They, on their return, presented the ring to the king with the tidings of his speedy translation to the glory of the blessed, for which he prepared himself by fervent acts of devotion. The ring was afterwards preserved with great veneration in a magnificent church, and from this miraculous ring was the custom derived — which for many years rendered the kings of England glorious — of blessing a great number of other rings by touching them with this on Good Friday; the rings, being distributed and worn, succeeded wonderfully in curing the falling sickness.

Thus in the holy King Edward was well exemplified the oracles of the wise man: "He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed."

By games of chance saints have gained souls to God. Written by Padre Daniel Bartolus.

"They made sport of all virtue before God."

NOT always does sanctity show itself rigid and austere, avoiding conversation, hating pastimes, delighting only in solitude, in discipline, and in crowning one's self with thorns; not seldom does it descend to pleasant recreations, to cheerful games, and to the company of discreet persons at fitting seasons.

Others commend the serious gravity of St. Bernard, who never saw his monks laugh. I here have satisfaction in praising one of his profitable games, but I trust that no one will be scandalized by seeing the venerable abbot taking

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a part in throwing dice. The saint, who was then convalescent, was once journeying on a magnificent horse, given him by a benefactor of the monastery, when he met one of his friends on the road, who appeared much surprised to see him so well mounted; and as they rode on in company he asked him: "Where, O Padre Bernardo, have you found so fine a horse? How superbly he carries himself! Oh, how willingly would I, who am fond of gambling, stake something on my part, and even myself on the game, to win him. I wish he were in other hands, for they would persuade his owner — let him be who he may — to play a game with me for him."

The saint, having heard he was willing to stake even himself, secretly inspired by God, answered: "And I would not refuse to stake the horse if I understood games of chance." "There is no need," said the other, "of either art or science to throw on a board three dice which I have with me; and he who throws the highest number will be the winner." "So let it be," answered the saint. "I accept the challenge; but think well on the offer and promise you have made. If I lose I immediately give up my horse and place him at your disposal; but if I win I shall require that, as you have offered, you shall place yourself in my hands, to do all that the Lord shall direct; and perhaps it might prove more profitable for you to lose than to gain."

Both having agreed cordially to the compact, and pursued their journey until they reached a suitable place, the gambler immediately produced the dice and renewed the proposal, which was seriously accepted by St. Bernard, who said: "Throw first, in God's name, and may He grant your fortune may prove what is best for you." The gambler threw the dice and gained a high number, and thinking himself the winner, placed his hand on the horse's bridle and in imagination saw himself in the saddle, making him leap to applaud his victory. But the saint said: "Softly, my friend; do not sing your triumph before the end of the game. You know that there is a higher number than that you have gained; let me at least try my chance." He did so, and his

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hand was so guided by Providence that he gained the highest possible number. His competitor was amazed at this result, and withdrawing his hand from the horse's rein, he confessed himself conquered, and declared himself ready for the performance of his promise. "Behold me," said he, "oh holy father, in your hands. I yield myself entirely to obey you, for I plainly see that the Lord intends some great good to me by your means." Then the abbot embraced him affectionately and invited him to go with him to Chiaravalle, where, seeing his sentiments entirely changed and disposed to the impressions of divine grace, he granted him the monastic habit after he had frequently and earnestly requested it.

After his admission into the order he begun and continued a life so nearly perfect and so adorned with every virtue that he was held up to the other monks as an example of religious excellence. Fortunate gambler! who by the loss of a game won eternal salvation, which he would perhaps have lost had he obtained the victory.

This interesting game of San Bernardo of gaining souls to God was invented by St. Ignatius, the founder of the order of Jesuits. Being once in Paris and effecting with much labour the conversion of souls, he went to the house of a Parisian doctor and theologian to pay him a visit, and found him engaged with one of his friends in playing billiards. They received him with a courteous welcome, and he drew near the table to watch the game. The nobleman, either to do honour to Ignatius or to divert himself at his expense, invited him to take a part in it. The saint in a pleasant manner excused himself, saying that he had never learned how to direct a blow, that cues and balls had never been handled by him; but the doctor was not satisfied and insisted on his playing, and Ignatius felt his heart inspired to accept the challenge. "Very well, my lord," said he, "I accept your challenge. It is true that I desire to play not for amusement but for gain; poor people like me have not much time to divert themselves for pastime, but since I am poor and have nothing but myself, I will stake myself on the

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game. If I lose I will serve you for a month under an obligation to do everything that it may please you to command me; but if I win, you for the same time shall be contented to do all that I request; and I can assure you that it will be nothing except what will be for your profit and happiness."

The Lord, who inspired the saint to make this proposal, moved the doctor also to accept it, the more that he thought himself already sure of the victory. Behold them then at the game. Ignatius, whom they were obliged to teach how to hold the cue, played first, and struck the ball as fortunately as if he had never pursued any other occupation; and the doctor, seeing that with all his skill and practice he had never done so well, said: "Ignatius, this is not the work of your hand, but that of divine Providence. I recognize the miraculous dealing of God, which chooses me to fail, that I may yield myself to obey your will. I yield myself. Behold me in your hands. Do with me what you please." Then the saint smiled and said: "And I accept you, and I hope by God's help to return you to yourself a much better man than when you gave yourself to me. I request only that you shall spend some time with God in spiritual exercises."

His friend willingly complied and spent a month in meditation and prayer, with more profit and consolation than he had ever experienced in all his previous life; and he blessed the day on which he lost the game, for it was worth more to him than if he had gained the kingdom of France. If all games were of this kind, Chrysostom would not have had reason to blame them as causing the loss of three precious things, — money, time, and souls.

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Simplicity of heart and tongue is blessed of God. Written by Laurentius Surius.

"The upright shall have good things in possession."

NOT less is the love with which God rewards simplicity of heart than the hatred with which He detests and punishes duplicity. As the wise man says in the Proverbs: "The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them." As the true servants of God have always been far removed from lies and deceit, they have chosen in times of persecution rather to die in torments than to save their lives by falsehood or deception. In this candid sincerity it appears to me that among many others St. Foca bears the palm, an humble gardener, but a glorious martyr, who led a holy life on a peninsula of Sinope near the gate of the city. Here he cultivated the land of a gardener and gathered fruits and herbs, not so much for his own food as to provide for the wants of travellers and pilgrims, who, knowing his liberality, resorted to his house; and all who knocked at his door were welcomed with beneficent charity.

The persecution against the Christians becoming more cruel, this holy man was denounced to the president of the province as one who entertained and encouraged the faithful; who resolved to put Foca to death, and sent some soldiers secretly in search of him to kill him. These arrived at the gate of Sinope at evening and entered, without knowing it, Foca's house, and with the freedom and boldness common to soldiers demanded food. He, according to his custom, welcomed them and offered them what little his house contained. They did not wait for much ceremony of speech, and he prepared for them a good supper of the best he had, serving them himself with such courteous charity that the soldiers felt kindly disposed towards him, saying among themselves that they had never met a better hearted man.

After supper, being convinced that they were in the hands

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of a man they could trust, they begun to enquire of him if by chance he was acquainted with a certain Foca, an entertainer and encourager of the Christians, of whom they were in search by order of the imperial prefect, who intended to make an example of him. The saint replied that he knew him well and that he would point him out to them, that they might go to repose without uneasiness, for in the morning he could show them how they could easily lay hands on him. That night he spent in fervent prayer and in digging his own grave, and in the morning he went to visit the soldiers and wish them a good morning. The answer they made him was the enquiry if he would abide by his promise to show them the sought-for Foca. "Do not fear," said he. "I will discover him to you; you may imagine him already in your power." "Let us go then," they replied, "and find him without delay." "You need not go," answered he; "he is here present. I am he; do with me what you will." At these words the soldiers were astonished and confounded, by the kind charity with which he had received them as well as by the ingenuous sincerity with which he revealed himself to his persecutors, as he might so easily have escaped death by flying the past night. They looked at each other in wonder, and no one dared to lay hands on their benefactor; they were even inclined to save his life and to report to the prefect that after a patient search Foca could not be found. But the saint, not consenting that they should be guilty of this deception or tell this falsehood, exhorted them to execute the prefect's commands, and offered himself to die for the faith of Jesus Christ. And so saying, he uncovered his neck for the soldiers, who cut off his head with one stroke of a sword, thus placing on it the crown of martyrdom.

The sincere faith of this holy martyr was so well pleasing to God that he distinguished it by wonderful miracles; and in consequence sumptuous churches were built in his honour both at Rome and Sinope, and great kings and princes sent precious crowns as offerings of gratitude for favours conferred on them through the intercessions of the poor gardener.

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But especially he conferred many benefits on pilgrims and sailors, as he had done in his lifetime, and sailors in violent storms are accustomed to invoke the aid of St. Foca. In great and imminent peril he has been seen on board ships, holding the helm or spreading the sails. For these benefits the custom has arisen among sailors and passengers, when they seat themselves at table on board ships, to set aside for him a share of the first dish, which is called the portion of St. Foca; this is usually purchased by some one of the sailors, who pays the price of it into the hands of the pilot, and when they arrive in port this money is distributed to the poor, that they may return thanks to their advocate for the successful voyage. On the seashore of the archipelago are often heard songs of invocation and thanks to St. Foca. Behold the great reward of the sincere simplicity of this saint, both of heart and tongue; thus was he recompensed by that God who says, "I am the truth." And all those who walk in sincerity will experience His favour towards them.

Charity converts great sinners. Written by Henricus Gran Germanus.

"Charity covers a multitude of sins."

SOME sinners resemble certain oriental gems which harden when placed in vinegar, but in oil become soft. This St. Francis the Seraphic well knew and taught. He had selected as keeper of the convent near the Borgo San Sepolcro the venerable Frate Angelo, a monk endowed with much excellence, but who inclined rather to the severity of zeal than to the gentleness of benevolence; as was experienced by three famous assassins, who by their frequent robberies and cruel murders on the road kept the neighbourhood in great terror. These one morning came to the convent gate, and sending for the almoner, asked of him food and wine in an insolent manner.

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The zealous frate, recognizing them as the robbers which they were, fearlessly gave them the charity of a severe reproof, telling them he was astonished that men without consciences should presume to approach a religious house, and that not content with robbing so many travellers they should dare to steal the very bread of the poor servants of God; that they must know that the thunderbolts of divine justice were suspended over their heads, and that they must depart without delay from that place, and not increase their enormous guilt. At such words of thunder the robbers trembled and looked at each other; it was a miracle that they did not seize their arms to make an example of the frate and a disturbance in the convent, but they were restrained by divine Providence for the good end for which He had destined them. They went away at last full of ill-will, wondering at their own patience in bearing so severe a reproof, for which, however, they intended hereafter to take revenge.

Hardly had they gone than St. Francis and a companion who had been asking charity arrived at the convent, one loaded with some loaves of bread and the other with a flask of wine. The almoner, seeing them enter, went to meet them and congratulate them on their success, and related to them the visit and the demand of the three thieves; how he had received them with a bitter reproof of their robberies and sent them away empty-handed. The good frate expected to have been commended for his zeal, but the saint, who was all charity and gentleness, showed great regret for the harshness of the course he had pursued, saying to him: "Brother Angelo, do you think this is a good way to treat your neighbour — to deny a little food to him who asks it? You deserve that those who give charity should also deny your request, and instead of bread you have even given them reproaches and accused them of robberies. Be they thieves or be they murderers, they are souls redeemed by the blood of Christ, who declares himself to have descended from heaven for the salvation of sinners. 'I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' And He

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left us an example how we ought to deport ourselves towards them in conversing familiarly with publicans. Thus the wicked are gained by charity when by harshness they are exasperated and in desperation are confirmed in ill-doing. You have transgressed the bounds of charitable zeal, and I command for a penance that you take this my sack of bread and this flask of wine and that you go in search of these robbers, and having found them, you kneel down before them in the most humble submission, confessing the sin of your uncourteous usage of them, asking their pardon for the love of God. Then in my name offer them this provision of bread and wine with apologies that we have nothing better. You will also say to them that if they will resolve no more to injure others, but to lead better lives, I, a poor asker of alms, will engage to supply them with food, and I confide in the divine goodness, which will enable me to maintain them at my own expense."

The good almoner, being brought to repentance by this admonition, promptly bowed his head to obedience and his shoulders to the load of bread and wine, and then over mountains and through valleys went in search of the robbers.

In the meantime St. Francis retired to offer prayers and supplications with tears to the divine mercy to enlighten those blind minds and to soften those hard hearts to repentance; and their fulfilment was not long delayed. Fra Angelico, after having journeyed some time, discovered the thieves seated behind a grove of trees. He went to meet them courageously, and saluted them with courtesy, first asking their pardon for his uncivil usage at the convent, and then offering them the provision, and delivering to them faithfully the message intrusted to him by his superior. They accepted the offering, and softened to compassion for the frate, prayed him to return on their part affectionate thanks to the Padre Francesco for his liberal gift and his kind offer for the future.

The frate having taken leave of them, they attacked the bread and wine with a good will to refresh themselves, and no sooner had they tasted them than they felt in their hearts

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and minds thoughts and affections of contrition and piety unknown before, being fed by God with the Bread of Life. At last one of them spoke. "Oh how unfortunate," said he, "are we! How long shall we lead this miserable life? We live always in danger of being suddenly killed or dragged before the tribunal of justice. And even should we succeed in escaping human vengeance, we cannot fly from the divine, which holds prepared for our crimes a hell of torments. Oh if death should seize us at this moment, what would become of us?" "And I also," said another, "feel my blood freeze in my veins when I call our sins to mind. What hope can we have of salvation, if after so many robberies and murders we do not ask pardon of God, when this poor monk, for a single reproof made with too much zeal, has come to us with so much penitence, so much humility, and so large an offering." "Let us then without delay," added the third, more penitent than either of the others, "accept the invitation and the offer which has been sent us by Francis, that great servant of God. Let us go to his feet to ask if he can assure us that we can obtain pardon of the divine mercy for so many enormities. Let us implore him to be our advocate, and let us adopt any measures he may suggest as suitable to amend our lives and escape damnation."

This counsel pleased all the three. They proceeded to the convent without delay and asked to see the Padre Francesco, who, knowing of their coming by celestial revelation, came promptly to welcome them; and they, modest and humble in manner, showed themselves contrite of heart and disposed to repentance; they confessed their many and great sins, and asked if there was still time to entreat their remission and the divine mercy. "If you, oh holy father," they said, "can assure us of pardon, behold us ready to change our lives, to do penance, to execute all your commands." The saint, who heard this with joy of heart and gladness of countenance, welcomed them in that guise in which the father received the prodigal son. He embraced them one by one, and then conducted them to a chamber in the cloister, where he explained to them the abounding compassion of divine

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clemency, which stands always with open arms to welcome contrite sinners and receive them into favour. "And therefore will the Lord wait, that He may be gracious unto you." "No matter," said he, "how great the number of your crimes, no matter how enormous they may have been, sovereign mercy is infinitely greater. It is enough if you detest them from your hearts; the Lord plainly declares you shall suffer for them no more: 'As for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness.' Has not the Saviour of the world confessed with His own mouth that He descended from heaven not so much to seek the righteous as sinners? What great hope then may you entertain, if you consider that to a thief just such as yourselves the Redeemer promised paradise for an act of contrition!"

In hearing of this fulness of celestial mercy their hearts melted, and they burst into tears; they threw themselves on their knees at the saint's feet, calling loudly for mercy, and imploring him to receive them in the convent to do penance. The good father's heart softened at the sight of such compunction. "And I," said he, "willingly admit you, and I hope in God's mercy, that having assumed the sacred dress, not only may your sins be forgiven but even that much grace may be granted you."

Thus was justice satisfied. They were enrolled in the order to their inexplicable satisfaction, and immediately commenced a life of austerities and exemplary penitence. Two of them, after having become well advanced in religion, soon terminated their lives in peace. The third survived many years, even till after he had seen the blessed death of his beloved father, San Francesco, whom he continued to imitate in continual prayers, in frequent fastings of bread and water, and in repeated flagellations, so that he merited and received from God extraordinary graces, the principal of which was a wonderful vision. One night after matins he was conducted by an angel, in a mysterious dream, to behold the torments of hell, and in particular the punishment prepared for him for his crimes if he had not been converted

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to God. Afterwards he was carried to heaven's gate, where he was asked by the doorkeeper of the celestial city who he was, and he answered that he was a frate minore. "Wait here," said the other, "till I call the holy Father Francesco to see if he will recognize you as belonging to him." The holy father came, all adorned with glory, and remembering him at once, embraced him and introduced him into the celestial Zion and showed him the admirable delights and the immense joys of paradise. The frate thought to remain there to enjoy that blessed abode, when he heard the saint say: "My brother, you are here but as a pilgrim; it is needful that you return to life for a short time; go to prepare yourself better. At the end of seven days I will come in person to receive your soul, to reconduct you to enjoy this blessedness forever." As he said, so it came to pass. The friar awoke from his dream and related the vision and the near termination of his life, and was afterwards attacked by a fever, which in just seven days reduced him to extremity, when the seraphic father descended from heaven, attended by a happy company of saints, to receive his soul, which by a peaceful death departed from the body and was conducted with joyful songs to the blessed country of heaven. What sinner, in seeing this wonderful change wrought by the omnipotent hand of God, will not yield himself to penitence? What heart will remain so hard as not to be melted to contrition in beholding the abundance of the paternal, even the maternal, love of God in welcoming prodigal but penitent children?

In the words of St. Cyprian, "The returning prodigal is welcomed with the fulness of a mother's love."

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The Lord is a great rewarder of benefits done to His servants. Written by Padre Giovanni Rho.

"Do good to the righteous and thou shalt receive a large reward."

THE promise made by the seraphic father to his spiritual children, that the Lord would be always the provider and rewarder of those who should benefit His order, was seen to be singularly confirmed in the life of the Padre Bernardino Pallio, a religious general of the Capuchin order. Many wonders happened to this great servant of God in the pilgrimages which he made for his religious visitations and for the preaching of the gospel. When he arrived at an inn to refresh himself with food, that which they set before him served not so much for the refreshment of the body as for the exercise of mortification, as he always abstained from the best and laid it before the Lord. But singularly worthy to be remembered is a prodigy which happened to him in an inn.

After a long journey he and his companions arrived, weary, at a country inn and asked of the host food and shelter, and he promised willingly to provide for them. A table was immediately spread where the servants of God refreshed themselves after the fatigues of the way, and dinner being over, the innkeeper demanded pay for the food; but the holy general replied he had no money to give him in payment, but instead they would pray God, who was most bountiful towards the bountiful, to reward him abundantly for his charity; and that he would say for him that devout prayer of the church: "Reward abundantly, O Lord, all good deeds done to us by eternal life," which was beyond all price. The landlord was not satisfied with this answer, and he replied that he desired money and not prayers, and he began to threaten noisily and angrily. Bernardino, seeing people collecting at the uproar, and moved without doubt by divine inspiration, took a pen and wrote the prayer on a piece of paper and gave it to the landlord, saying: "Place this in one

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scale and as much money as you claim in the other, and I will prove to you how much more the prayer weighs than the money." These words changed the anger of the host and his family into laughter, and he replied: "If it does not weigh as much will you give me any satisfaction except words?" "I certainly will," said the holy man, full of hope; "only put it to the proof." The scales were brought and the trial was made. Wonderful prodigy! The scale which contained the paper proved so heavy that the other in which the money had been placed rose in the air. Astonished at such a result the landlord changed the paper several times from one side of the scales to the other, and always with the same result: the paper outweighing the money, to the great wonder of the bystanders, who called out "A miracle!"

The innkeeper was overwhelmed with holy horror at seeing the value of the prayer, and took a better course, making an inviolable vow that in time to come he would never receive any money on payment from any one who, having lodged in his house, should repeat the above-named prayer.

A long time passed, but no traveller had come to the inn of so much piety as to put his observance of the vow to the proof; for to speak truth not a small part of mankind are like animals who feed on acorns under an oak tree, never raising their eyes to behold and thank the tree from whence the benefit comes.

At last a great cardinal with a train of numerous prelates passed that way, and they halted at noon to dine at the inn. The host, thinking that the good fortune had come to his house to make a great harvest of money, immediately gave orders that the most magnificent dinner which was possible in that place should be prepared. With great care they sought for an abundance of delicacies, and set a dinner before them worthy of their rank. After dinner the cardinal and all his court rose and intoned in a loud voice the grace: "Recompense abundantly, O Lord," etc. Oh! then the good man's heart died within him, as if a sudden hailstorm had devastated his fields; he repented of his too splendid repast, seeing himself compelled by his vow to receive no payment.

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He remained some time lost in thought, not being able to decide what to do; but at last the grace of God conquered, and he determined to refuse constantly any recompense. And when the treasurer called him to give him satisfaction, he replied frankly that he desired no money, that he wished them a good journey, and that he was sufficiently paid by the honour done to his house. Neither could any persuasions induce him to receive a single quattrino.

The cardinal, being informed of so much liberality in one of a class usually devoted to gain, was much surprised, and sending for him asked him why he was so disinterested as to refuse any recompense for so abundant a repast? He replied sincerely that he was bound by a vow, and gave him a distinct account of the miracle wrought by the Capuchin father by means of the same devout prayer which his lordship had repeated after dinner. This wise prince in the purple was more astonished than before, and commended highly his religious constancy, adding that without doubt the Lord would show himself an abundant rewarder of such faithful charity, and that indeed he could not allow himself to be surpassed in liberality.

Neither were these words of ceremony without foundation of deeds, for having returned to Rome he obtained the ordination of a priest for one of the innkeeper's sons, with a rich abbey with an annual income of many hundred golden scudi; so that the landlord experienced the truth of the promise of scripture that charity should be rewarded a hundred fold.

Three wonders may here be seen at once — faith in Bernardino, religion in the innkeeper, and gratitude in the cardinal; and may we be led to render thanks to God after the mercies of the table, according to the instruction of Deuteronomy: "When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God."

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A loving contest between two brothers, each wishing to die for the other. Written by Padre Giovanni Rho.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

LET fabulous poetry now cease to celebrate the strength of mutual affection between Pylades and Orestes, and between Sophronia and Olindo, who with wonderful love offered themselves to die for each other in a bloody theatre. True history shows us more admirable examples, wrought not so much by moral benevolence as by that divine and supernatural love which teaches that "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren," as may be proved by the miraculous favour with which God is pleased to reward it. Gasparo and Ferdinando Fimenez, two noble and pious brothers, were sailing in a great ship called the St. Paul, which set sail from Seville for India. They had accomplished a part of the voyage successfully on the high seas when they were overtaken by a furious tempest, so that they were in imminent danger of going down; and the wind blowing a hurricane, the ship could not resist the fury of the storm, but both sails and masts were carried away, and they were obliged to throw all the cargo overboard to lighten it. And notwithstanding this, they would have been sunk by the great waves that swept over them had it not been for the many prayers and vows which the passengers made to all the saints of paradise, in consequence of which the wind was somewhat abated. But they were still in great danger, for the ship, with neither masts nor sails, could no longer pursue its course; and the greater part of the passengers and sailors were obliged to resort to the boat, and recommend themselves to the fortune of the sea, or rather to the providence of God. But in so doing they incurred not less danger of shipwreck, for the boat, being overloaded by the great number of passengers, could not support their weight, but appeared to be on the

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point of sinking, so that it was necessary to lighten it by throwing some one overboard. In this desperate state of things they decided, in order that all might have an equal chance, to draw lots and decide on whom the fate should fall to throw himself into the sea. At this decision each one grew pale and trembled, fearing that on him this misfortune would fall. But the hard fate fell on Gasparo, the elder of the Fimenez brothers, who generously consented to sacrifice himself for the safety of the others.

But Ferdinando the younger brother opposed him, offering to throw himself into the sea in his place. "On me," said he, "who am the younger, let this lot fall, not on you who are the elder and more worthy to live." "Indeed no," answered the other, "I who have lived the longest already ought to die more willingly than you, who have come later to the light of life." "My death," replied the younger, "will be less insupportable to our parents, and more praised by the world, as it will be encountered for fraternal love, while yours would appear to be incurred, not by the choice of virtue but by an unavoidable destiny." "If Heaven," said the elder, "had chosen your life for the safety of the rest it would have caused the lot to fall on you. It has chosen me, and you ought not to oppose the will of Heaven." "Ah," said the other, "let not the accident of a blind fortune be the arbiter of our life and death, but let the error of chance be corrected by the judgment of prudence, which teaches that the younger should be sacrificed to the older."

"I can say no more," concluded Gasparo, "but that I am ready to die; life preserved by your death would be too bitter." "My death," repeated Ferdinando, "is beyond your power to prevent, for if I do not perish in the sea, I should die of grief for the loss of so dear a brother. Detain, oh passengers, so great a man, so much more worthy than I to live." "Stay," cried Gasparo, "this youth of so much promise, who does not deserve to die in my place." Oh, what a prodigy of charity was this! You expect, oh reader, to know whose was the victory in this loving contest, which could not be prolonged, as the boat was in such peril. Fer-

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dinando the younger brother conquered, and with the great compassion of the others threw himself into the waves, and would then have perished had not the sea, astonished — so to speak — by so much virtue, refrained from burying him in its depths; or if God the rewarder of a virtue so great and superhuman had not bestowed on the magnanimous youth a wonderful robustness of strength, so that he kept his head above the waves by an unconquerable strength of arm, and followed the boat by swimming an incredible distance. The sailors who were amazed at the sight, recognized it as miraculous, and with loud voices wished courage to the swimmer and made vows to God, and at last, touched by wiser sentiments and pious affections, they saw their cruelty in having cast to manifest perdition one whom by so signal a prodigy God showed His will to save. They then took the better course of stopping the boat and taking him in, and he was received with tender embraces, especially by his brother; and God, who had thus rewarded the disinterestedness of Ferdinando in devoting himself to death for his brother, was pleased to behold the compassion of the sailors, who had received back their companion with the danger of shipwreck for themselves; so that suddenly the heavens became serene, the sea grew calm, and with a favourable wind they soon arrived in port. Oh how well may we thus see confirmed the words of the sacred Canticles: "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it!"

How the tears of repentance change black coals into beautiful stars. Written by Theophilus Raynandus.

"Put Thou my tears into Thy bottle."

THE saying of St. Chrysostom, who called the tears of contrition omnipotent, will not appear an exaggeration if we consider the great power they had to disarm the right hand of the Most High, incensed against a most wicked captain of a band of robbers. In the time of

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the Emperor Mauritius the leader of a numerous company, under a human form, contained the heart of a bear, and delighted in nothing more than in human blood. Robberies and murders were his amusements; he, with a band of barbarous assassins, infested the roads of Thrace — and woe to the unfortunate travellers who fell into his hands! — so that the country was avoided by travellers, and the fields were deserted by labourers. The tidings of these robberies and murders reached the ears of the Emperor Mauritius at Constantinople and greatly incensed him; and to put a stop to such calamities he immediately despatched a legion of soldiers to Thrace to trace the robbers and to bring them back prisoners; but with all the industry of the soldiers and their frequent ambushes, they met with no success; for these thieves kept always on the watch, and at the least alarm fled to certain caves where they had great store of provisions, and there remained concealed. It was even said that certain demons, their familiars who much desired to keep them in life and liberty, kept them informed of the strategems of the soldiers and defended them against their attacks.

The ministers of justice being compelled to return without the desired prey, the emperor was much disturbed and uncertain what course to pursue — seeing that he had to deal not only with evil men, but with malicious demons — when the thought came into his heart to try benevolent and liberal means with the leader of these malefactors, and thus influence his soul, as severe and threatening measures had not availed to capture his body; and his good angel suggested to him, as a pious prince, to overcome the cunning malice of malignant spirits by the powerful virtue of miraculous saints. With this intention he ordered a reliquary of gold of most beautiful workmanship, and placed within it some sacred relics of sanctified bodies; and consigning it to two messengers, sent them to the valley where the robbers had taken shelter, with orders to present it in his name to the captain, offering him at the same time his imperial favour. The messengers executed his commands and went to make the offer, which the barbarian received first with

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wonder and afterwards with thanks that his majesty had condescended to grant him such favour. As a token of gratitude and veneration he took the casket and hung it round his neck so that it lay near his heart. When, behold a miracle! That sacred reliquary began to knock and strike that obstinate breast, and to soften that hard heart to repentance for his crimes; he felt his soul change and thoughts and sentiments of true contrition awake within him; and agitated by remorse of conscience, he found no rest until he resolved to go to Constantinople and throw himself at the emperor's feet, offering to endure any punishment in expiation of his crimes.

He unfastened his sash, and placing it with his own hands around his neck, went full of contrition and asked pardon. He was welcomed with gracious clemency by the emperor, who exhorted him to seek to obtain from God as full a pardon as he freely accorded him. While he was seeking to procure this by prayers and tears and penitence, he was suddenly attacked by a fever, and he asked and obtained permission to take shelter in the famous hospital of St. Samson, where he thought but little of the cure of his body, but much of that of his soul; and it would be difficult to describe how many were the tears and groans of his truly contrite heart. No words were uttered by his lips but those of the prodigal son: "I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight;" his eyes became two fountains of tears, so that he might say with the penitent prophet: "I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears." He held continually a handkerchief in his hand to wipe his eyes, which were steeped in scalding tears; and thus shedding many tears, his heart softening by contrition, and drying his eyes with the handkerchief, he one night came to his last hour, dying rather from compunction of soul than from illness of body.

In the meantime the prefect of the hospital, a man distinguished no less for a spirit of piety than for his knowledge of the art of medicine, beheld in a dream a wonderful vision.

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He saw around the bed of the dying thief a crowd of deformed Ethiopians come out from hell, one of whom held in his hand a large parchment on which were written all his sins; and another held a pair of scales in the act of weighing them, and the description of his crimes being placed on one side, bore it immediately down. Oh how great was their weight! Then the demons danced round him in delight, and stood ready to seize his soul and bear it to the abyss. On the other side stood the holy angels, sad and melancholy because they could find no good deed to place in the other side of the scale to weigh against so many sins; when one of them, looking attentively at the pillow of the dead man, saw and took his handkerchief bathed in tears and placed it in the balance; and behold! it not only weighed down the list of his misdeeds, but that rose up high in the air.

Thus the sadness of the angels passed to the demons, and the joy of these into the hearts and faces of those; who embraced that soul with joy and songs as they bore it to the eternal joys of paradise. The malignant spirits raged in vain, complaining and cursing the mercy of God, who for tears of repentance had pardoned such a great number of enormities, till they went to bury themselves in hell, full of rage and confusion at having by a short contrition lost a soul they had possessed so long.

After this vision the doctor woke up, and to ascertain if this was the illusion of a dream, or indeed true, he hastened to the thief's bed and found him dead, and over his eyes the handkerchief steeped in tears. Having thus ascertained the truth, he exclaimed in a loud voice which summoned all the other sick men to the spectacle; and all asserted that the handkerchief had not been wet save by the flood of tears shed by that great penitent.

The doctor lost no time in going to court and relating the vision to Mauritius, and showed him the handkerchief bathed in tears; and he and all the court greatly rejoiced and rendered loving thanks to the Saviour, who to this assassin had renewed the work of His mercy once extended on the cross to the penitent thief.

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In this wonderful conversion the power of these penitent tears is deserving of great admiration, so that we may say in the words of St. Gregory: "Oh happy tears, which shed by a penitent soul raise a sinner from the depths of hell to the height of heaven!"

The cunning of the wicked conquered by the wisdom of the just. Written by Padre Gregorius.

"He taketh the wise in their own craftiness; and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong."

ST. Gregory in his "Morali" asserts that divine Providence often teaches His servants the art of taking the crafty in their craftiness; and in his dialogues he proves it by curious events. In the days when the Goths tyrannized over Italy, the holy Abbot Isaac led a celestial life in a monastery of Benedictines near Spoleto. Among other excellent gifts he was endowed with the spirit of prophecy. One evening he commanded his monks to carry to the fields a certain number of instruments of agriculture, spades and shovels, and leave them in the ground among the furrows; and these good servants of God simply and blindly obeyed, not knowing the cause of this strange and peremptory command; but the saint by his superior intelligence beheld future events and ordered wisely, for that same night a band of wicked robbers broke through the hedge and entered stealthily into the garden to steal the vegetables, and discovering here and there by the light of the moon exactly as many spades as they were in number, they felt their hearts moved to repentance by the Holy Spirit, and said among themselves: "These are the instruments of our calling which the Lord has sent to our hand. Are we intended to labour for the benefit of these servants of God?" They were all of one mind, and seizing the spades began to dig with indefatigable industry. In the meantime the monks rose from

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sleep and went into the choir to chant matins, after which the abbot ordered the steward to cook a large dish of vegetables; and the morning having dawned, he summoned some monks and directed them to take some bread, some wine, and other provisions, and follow him to the garden; where, coming face to face with the labourers, he said: "Good morning, my friends. You must be fatigued with so much labour; it is now time to refresh yourselves. Behold this provision which the Lord has sent you." They, much astonished but still very hungry, did not wait to be invited a second time, but immediately set themselves to work with their teeth as diligently as they had already done with their hands. Afterwards the saint ordered some vegetables gathered and gave a portion to each one, saying to them as he took leave of them: "Beware in future of allowing yourselves to be conquered by the demon of theft. When you have need of vegetables do not break through the hedge to steal them, but come to the door and ask them in charity, and you shall be better provided."

More gracious still was the sagacity by which he detected certain deceivers, who, knowing the liberal charity of the saint, laid a plot to entrap him.

For this purpose they took off their good clothes and hid them in a concealed place, and went to the monastery half covered with miserable rags, trembling with cold. They pretended they had been stripped by thieves, and asked for the love of God alms of either clothes or money to relieve their misfortunes. The abbot, expressing compassion, had them conducted to the guest's room, to warm themselves at the fire and refresh themselves with food. He then called one of the monks and said secretly in his ear: "Go without delay to the neighbouring wood, where in the midst of such a road you will find an oak tree with a hollow trunk; search well within, and you will find a bundle of clothes, which you will bring to me secretly in the antechamber." The monk executed the command and brought the clothes to the abbot. The guests saw him return with cheerful faces, thinking he had come with the good news that he had

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found a supply for them in the wardrobe, and they repeated their request for charity. "Certainly," replied the saint, "I will provide for you. My heart will not permit me to send you away so ragged and half clothed to freeze with cold." And having the clothes brought in, he gave to each one his own, saying: "Take it in the name of the Lord, and I hope that it may fit you well." As they received them they saw plainly that each one had the same which he had hidden in the forest; and in amazement they went away in silence without any explanation, saying afterwards among themselves that it was not well to trifle with saints, who know how to take the crafty in their own craftiness.

To these examples of wise foresight one more, equally memorable, shall be added. A citizen of Spoleto, much devoted to the holy abbot, desiring to commend himself to his prayers, in which he had much faith, determined to send him a present as a token of gratitude; and he gave to one of his servants two baskets to carry to the monastery, filled with fruit and other gifts. As the servant was on his way to the monastery he allowed himself to be conquered by a demon, who suggested the thought to his heart that it would be sufficient to carry the one only which was the best; and in consequence he hid the other under a hedge, intending to take it thence on his return.

Arrived at the sacred cloister he presented the basket to the father abbot in his master's name, praying him to remember him in his devout prayers. The saint accepted the gift, and with thanks promised to remember his request; then he added to the bearer of it: "And to you I will give this salutary advice to recompense you for your fatigue in bringing it to me: beware of touching that basket which you have hidden under a hedge on the way, for a poisonous serpent has entered it. Woe to you if you taste that fruit!" The astonished servant blushed at these words, and not daring either to confess or deny his fault, left the monastery in confusion; and having reached the hedge, he saw with his eyes a great viper lying across the basket licking the fruit

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with his poisonous tongue; and leaving the basket where it was, he fled in terror from the place. Ah! holiness cannot be deceived by wickedness, and well has the Lord said by His prophet to evildoers: "Touch not mine anointed: and do my prophets no harm."

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BOOK IV

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SELECTIONS FROM

THE PERFECT LEGENDARY

OF THE LIVES AND WORKS

OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

AND OF ALL THE SAINTS

WHOSE FEASTS ARE CELEBRATED, AND
WHOSE OFFICES ARE RECITED IN
THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH,
IN CONFORMITY WITH THE
ROMAN BREVIARY.

TOGETHER WITH THE LIVES
OF MANY OTHER SAINTS WHO
ARE IN THE CALENDAR: WITH
MANY AUTHORITIES AND FIGURES
ADAPTED FOR EACH SAINT
COLLECTED FROM GRAVE AND
APPROVED AUTHORS, AND GIVEN
TO THE LIGHT BY THE REVEREND
DOCTOR, MONSIGNORE

ALFONSO VIGLIEGAS,

UNDER THE TITLE OF

FLOWERS OF SANCTITY

TRANSLATED WITH ALL DILIGENCE FROM
THE SPANISH INTO THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE
THIS EDITION IS ENRICHED WITH THE
LIVES OF THE SAINTS WHO HAVE BEEN
CANONIZED OR ADDED, BY HIS HOLINESS
OUR LORD THE POPE CLEMENT X
INNOCENT XI AND ALEXANDER VIII

IN VENICE AND IN BASSANO MDCCXXVI
BY GIOVANNI ANTONIO REMONDINI
WITH LICENSE OF THE SUPERIORS

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From the Prologue to the Flowers of Sanctity.

THE feasts of each month are placed in their proper order, beginning at the first of January; also the lives and histories of the saints who are in the calendar of the reformed breviary. And I believe that this book will be very acceptable to all those who say divine office; for when they shall say the office of any saint they can turn to this book and read the history of that saint, which will certainly afford great content — being, as in truth they may be, secure and certain that all they read is authentic and true. And although ignorant people may derive much benefit from this book, it will not displease even the learned, because this will spare them the fatigue of turning over many books, and because they will find here collected what they would find with difficulty in many other books and scattered here and there.

I have also recorded in the history of the feast or life of each saint the time and the day when the events occurred, and the name of the prince, king, or emperor who reigned at that time; and I have used much diligence not less fatiguing than important, as I have found on these subjects great discrepancies among the greatest authors, some saying one thing and some another. And I, to tell the truth, have studied much and carefully, comparing together many lives, histories, and martyrdoms of saints; and on many points I have often found doubts to be explained; and when, having used all diligence, I cannot precisely ascertain the truth of the year when any event occurred, I say in this manner: "It happened in about such a year," according to the best of my judgment; and knowing but too well my poor ability for such an undertaking — though I have always implored the divine aid, and the intercession of the Virgin Mary the mother of God, and of the glorious evangelist St. John, whom I have chosen as my particular advocates and patrons in this work — yet besides having used all possible care to

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make no mistake in what I have written, I have consulted on all points with learned persons and famous theologians in whose opinion I could confide; and in particular with the renowned doctors Gregorio Ernandez of Valesco and Francesco of Pisa, whose acute intellect and rare qualities are known in Spain and elsewhere by the books which they have caused to be printed. As this book has been subjected to the censure of these two learned servants of God, I hope that which they have approved may be also approved by all those who with pious affections and candid and Christian souls may read these histories for the pleasure of themselves or their neighbours. With all this care it is a possible thing that there may be in this book something not conformed to that which the holy mother Roman church holds and teaches; and if so, I desire it to be held as unsaid; I revoke and annul it and hold it as nothing worth. And if in this my work any clause or sentence may be found which may be capable of diverse constructions, any one of which may be erroneous or suspicious, I declare that my intention was to say it in a Catholic sense. I declare, moreover, that not only in this, but in all other things, either written or preached, or what in any other manner I have said or shall say, or have written or shall write, I submit myself to the correction and censure of the holy mother Roman church, and of its head, who is the high pontiff, and of all its faithful ministers; and I am prepared and hold myself always ready to correct any error which may be told or pointed out to me, which I as a mortal man may have committed. And not only will I obey the censure of the holy Roman Catholic church and of its ministers — as I have already said — but if any one of my neighbours with charity and Christian friendship shall show me anything in which I may have erred, giving sufficient reasons which shall have more weight and be more convincing than my own, I will thank him for his diligence, and will hold myself obliged to him. And though it may happen that in reading this book some things may be found in it contrary to those which have been said by some grave authors who have written of the lives of the saints, let it not

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be blamed suddenly, or regarded as an error, or as too much rashness; for it may be held certain that in saying what I have said I have followed some other author not less authentic than he who says the contrary, as often happens in similar matters of this gravity and importance.

I now here conclude my prologue by praying God earnestly that this my work may be acceptable to His Divine Majesty, and a satisfaction to all Christians; and that with such zeal and devotion they may exercise themselves in reading the lives and the deaths of the saints that beholding their examples and meriting their intercessions, by both these means we may all attain the last end of the blessed, where in their company and that of the angels we shall enjoy the presence of God eternally. Amen.

The adoration of the three Magi.

AMONG the other wonders which happened in those days when the Saviour was born was this: that a new star appeared in the east, which signified the new light that was come into the world to lighten those who were in the darkness and shadow of death. In the country where the star appeared were three wise men, of whom it was commonly said that they were kings. These, according to the opinion of some authors, were of the race of Balaam the prophet, who prophesied to the Gentiles the coming of Christ to the world, and for the sign of which he foretold that a new star should appear toward the country of Judea; and he counselled them that when they saw that star they should follow it, and should go to adore a great King, who would be born in Judea and be Lord of the universe. Even from his time sentinels had been posted upon a mountain of the east, in order that as soon as they should see this star they should give notice of it to the lords of the country, that they might go without delay to pay reverence to the new king. But whatever might be the cause, whether this, or what is more probable, that these three kings knew by particular

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inspiration of the Holy Spirit what the star already seen by them signified, they immediately left their kingdoms, travelling upon dromedaries to make the journey in less time, and went to worship the new-born King. When the three kings arrived at Jerusalem and entered into the city, the star which had guided them disappeared — by the particular providence of God — in order that their guide failing them, they might be forced to take counsel and make enquiries in that city, which was the metropolis where the sacred scriptures were generally studied; that by these means should be published abroad the birth of the Son of God, and that the Jews and Herod should be without excuse; and that the care and diligence of the Magi should reprove their negligence and indifference, because having Christ so near them, they did not seek Him, while these strangers came from distant countries for this cause alone. The Magi then having entered into Jerusalem began to ask and say: "Where is He who is born King of the Jews?" Truly these wise men are worthy of praise for many reasons in making this demand. The first is, that although they were abandoned by their celestial guide, they did not lose heart nor even turn back, but went on their way with diligence; thus setting us an example that we must not grow fainthearted nor lose our interest in spiritual exercises when we see ourselves abandoned by the rays of devotion and the light of gladness and interior sweetness, but we must labour to go forward, having a firm hope that the light of consolation which we saw at first will return to visit us by the command of the Lord, as the star returned to these saintly kings.

They are also deserving of praise for the holy boldness with which they published a new king in Jerusalem, without having fear of Herod, who might have been capable of having them put to death for this cause. In this relation St. John Chrysostom asks: "Tell me, oh good kings, do you not know that whoever proclaims a new king in the life of a reigning king is liable to death, that you do this thing, and thus place yourselves in manifest danger from Herod, who may easily command you to be put to death?" The

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same saint answers thus: "The faith of these kings was so great, and the love they bore to the new-born King so fervent, that even before they had seen Him they were ready to die for love of Him." Similar in its nature was that which is related, in the second book of Kings, of those three valiant soldiers who, knowing that David suffered from thirst and longed to drink of the water of the fountain of Bethlehem, passed through the midst of the enemy's squadrons and drew water from the fountain and brought it to David at the great risk of their lives.

King Herod, having information of the coming of the kings and of the object of their search, and knowing that the kingdom of Judea did not belong to him by succession or birth, but that he had received it as a reward from the Romans, was disturbed; and the king being disturbed, all the city of Jerusalem was so likewise, and began to adore him, giving him to understand that they desired to find no other king, and that he might lay aside all disquietude which arose from the thought that they would ever consent to have another king, even so powerful and just as it was said this new king should be. Their reason was that Herod dissimulated and pretended not to be aware of the many sins and vices which were committed by the principal men among the Jews. Herod then assembled together all the wise and learned doctors of Jerusalem and enquired of them what the scriptures said on this subject; and they replied to him in the words of the prophet Micah, who foretold that from Bethlehem should come Him who was to reign in Israel.

At this time Herod sent secretly for the Magi and enquired of them at what time the star had appeared to them; he told them what the doctors had said, and sent them to Bethlehem, praying them that they would seek the new king with diligence, and that having found him they would bring notice of him on their return; because he himself desired to go to worship him. The Magi, having this intention, departed from Jerusalem and went on their way towards Bethlehem; and as soon as they had left the city the star appeared to them again, which was to them a cause of great

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joy; and following it, they arrived at the house where, thirteen days before, Christ had been born. Here the star stood still, shedding many rays, which was as if it said: "Here is He whom you seek; this is the palace of the new-born King; this is the court of heaven, since here its King has His abode!" O holy God! what wonderful emotion must those Magi have felt in their hearts when they saw what the star showed them — this chamber of the King whom they sought, a place more suitable for beasts than for men; since not for men but for beasts had it been prepared. The holy Virgin, as may readily be believed, expected the coming of the Magian kings; for as it had been revealed to many prophets, it cannot be doubted that it had been also revealed to her. We may also suppose that she prepared the room, not adorning it with hangings of gold or silk — for these she neither possessed nor desired — but sweeping it and cleaning it as best she might; because where God dwells, though poverty pleases Him, He is displeased by negligence and want of neatness and cleanliness. Here were thousands of angels who accompanied her and served her as mother of their God and Lord; and they, it can be believed, gave her warning of the arrival of the kings, saying to her: "Holy mother, the Magi come. They are already near, and they marvel that the King whom they seek should have His dwelling in this place; and the star which has guided them has informed them of Him in its own manner. They will now come in, and thou, lady, wilt begin to enjoy the honour of being the mother of the Most High. Behold Him here, blessed Virgin; take in your arms Him who supports the universe with His, because that is the place where in this world it pleases Him best to be." So the mother of God did. She took the young child in her arms, having first given Him many kisses on His lovely face, all smiling and happy, because though a child only thirteen days old, He knew, notwithstanding, the homage which the kings paid Him, and was well pleased with it.

The Magi then entered, and if they wondered at first, seeing the room from without, they were much more amazed

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when they found that the King whom they sought was indeed here. They were astonished to have found a king so great in extreme poverty, and Him, who deserves to be adored above all kings, in a place so poor and mean and with so little company; because they saw only the mother, who held Him in her arms, St. Joseph the husband of the Virgin not being then present as St. Hilary affirms. The Magi addressed themselves to the holy Virgin, whose presence announced who she was, although she was in such a place; and bowing themselves before her, they prayed her that she would show them her blessed Son, since they had come from the utmost confines of the east, guided by a star, to see Him and pay Him homage and worship. The Virgin granted them this favour, lifting the curtain of the Holy of Holies, and the Magi, turning their eyes to the face of the blessed Child, knew that this was the Sun whose star had guided them even to this place. They knew that this was the Saviour of the world, and that being Man He was still God, and as to God and Man, these kings made Him offerings one by one; but as is said by St. Remigio, each of the three offered Him the same things. They offered Him incense as God, myrrh as mortal man, and gold as a great king. After the Magi had made their offerings they did not delay longer; but having thanked the glorious Virgin in the name of her blessed Son, they departed happy and content, as is related by St. Matthew who wrote this history; and it having been revealed to them that they should not return to King Herod, they returned to their own country by another way.

From this arose the custom, which the church observes in processions, of leaving the church by one road and returning to it by another. By this it would be well that all Christians should learn from the Magi not only to seek Christ, but having found Him again, even though they had lost Him, to return by a different way from the other; because if at first they walked in the ways of sin, they should return by the ways of holiness; and in this manner they will arrive at the true country, which is heaven.

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The church celebrates this solemnity on the same day on which the kings adored Jesus Christ, which was on the sixth of January, in the first year of our Lord, Cesar Augustus being Emperor of Rome.

The life of Saint Sebastian, most illustrious martyr.

MAXIMIAN and Diocletian, most cruel tyrants and capital enemies of the name of Jesus Christ, holding the Roman empire, their rage and fury against the Christians was so extreme that no emperor exceeded them in cruelty. In every city and village of the empire the prisons were full of Christians; they sought no other delinquents and did no other justice than unjustly to put to death an infinite number of Christians. There was in these times an illustrious cavalier born in Milan whose name was Sebastian. His father was of the city of Narbonne in France, and his mother one of the principal ladies of Milan.

Diocletian, knowing this, received him into his service, either for his noble character or his illustrious birth, and gave him an honourable post, making him a captain of cavalry of the first squadron of his guard.

While Sebastian filled this office with all diligence, faithfully striving to do those things which were pleasing to the emperor, he did not neglect a single point of his duty in the service of God; being a Christian secretly, although in some particular circumstances he declared what he was; such as seeing some Christians, who through the cruelty of their torments were near losing their faith, he comforted them, and gave them courage so that they remained constant even to the end.

It happened that there were once taken in Rome, where the emperor and Sebastian were, two principal men who were called Marcus and Marcelliano; they were the sons of Tranquillino, and had wives and children. These two were conducted before Cromatius the prefect, who, seeing that neither flatteries nor threats could induce them to sacrifice

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to idols, resolved to give them thirty days' time, in order that they might reflect and resolve what they would do; and if when the thirty days had passed, they remained steadfast in their determination to be Christians, he resolved to condemn them to death, confiscating all their goods, which were most abundant.

In these days the saints were much molested by people who went to visit them and persuade them not to allow themselves to be destroyed and put to death, and among the rest went Tranquillino their father, who with many tears said to them: "Oh my sons, who will be the stay of my old age? Who will close my eyes when I shall be no more? Who will carry my body to the tomb? Have pity upon me, my children; consider that I have brought you up, that I have placed you in noble condition. Now why do you choose to go voluntarily to death? Why do you not have pity on your youth, on my gray hairs, on the honour of our house, on our wealth, which being confiscated will pass to other masters, and I in one single day shall lose my possessions, my honour, and my two sons who are the light of my eyes?" Their father said this with many tears; after which came their mother, bowed down with sorrow, who with a sad and broken voice reminded her children how much she had suffered and fatigued herself for them in giving them birth and nursing them, and left nothing unsaid or undone which might move them to compassion. Their young and beautiful wives also came with their children in their arms, and with sighs and grievous lamentations called themselves unfortunate widows, solitary and without comfort. The poor little children added to this melancholy music, crying bitterly. But the contrast which was brought before these holy martyrs did not finish here, because every day their friends and relatives came to visit them, endeavouring to persuade them to change their intentions by reminding them of their friendship, of the beauty and pleasures of this world, of the great fortunes they would lose, together with their great name; and still they sought to part with all this for a shameful and cruel death.

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This contrast was so great, and the means used with these saints were so powerful, that it appeared that their hearts were beginning to melt and their resolution to give way and yield to the will of their friends.

Sebastian, being also present and fearing the loss of the two soldiers of Christ, made before them a public confession that he also was a Christian, without any regard to the result, which could be only his own destruction. He began to address all those present, and with a voice full of fervour said: "If this our life were eternal and without sorrow, it would be but reasonable that we should make every sacrifice to preserve it; but since it must end so soon, with what reason can we, for the love of this life, lose another so different? This is temporal and that is eternal; this full of labour and sorrow, that of joy and peace. Do you not know that God says Himself, with His own mouth, that he who denies Him upon earth will be denied by Him in heaven, as unworthy of it, and condemned to everlasting pains? On the contrary, those who confess Him upon earth shall be confessed by Him in heaven, and He will give them the reward of eternal life. Do you not know that in that place no one forgets parents or children, wives, families, or friends, but has them even more in his thoughts than here; and there one can do much more for them than he can in any manner do for them in this world? And this being the truth, seek no longer by your tears and prayers to weaken the good resolution of the soldiers of Jesus Christ; for if they should repent by reason of your entreaties, you would lose them and they would lose themselves." Sebastian did not make an end here, but turning to the holy martyrs said to them: "Here, cavaliers of Christ, may you see the cunning of Satan; that which he could not obtain from you by means of the torments inflicted upon you by your enemies, he seeks to obtain by the prayers and tears of your relatives and friends. Look well to this, and if you have gained the victory once, strive for it again. Do not spare your bodies, which in spite of all care must decay and become food for worms. The suffering will endure but for a day and the joy will be eternal."

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This and much more Sebastian said, and it happened that while he spoke there came a great light from heaven which surrounded them all, and in the midst of it was seen a beautiful and shining youth who made a sign of being the author of what Sebastian said. All those who were present stood astonished and amazed, believing it certain that what Sebastian had said was truly inspired by heaven. There happened, besides this, something which much confirmed in the faith all those who were present, which was this. There was present a lady, the wife of Nicostratus — who was master of the house where the saints were kept guarded — who by reason of illness had become dumb, and having heard that which Sebastian said, and it appearing good to her, not being able to praise it by words, she did so by signs; and not content with this, she went to throw herself at the feet of the saint, who, understanding that such was the will of God, and that it pleased Him that the lady should be cured for the spiritual advantage of all those who were present, commanded her that she should stand up; and calling on the name of Jesus Christ she was healed and spoke in such a manner that she was heard by all present, and in particular by her husband Nicostratus; who, giving thanks to the Lord, opened the doors to all the Christians who were in prison in his house, asking their forgiveness and begging them to depart from Rome free, while he would remain and answer by his death for this crime, which was, that having adored idols in times past he always persecuted the Christians. They answered him that it would be better that he should be accompanied by all the Christians who were in prison in his keeping, to which he willingly consented.

Many Christians now assembled in the house of Nicostratus, and all heard the words of life from the lips of Sebastian and spent the time in watchings, fastings, and prayers. The prefect, having knowledge of this, sent for Nicostratus and asked him for what reason he had assembled together so many Christians in his house. He, seeking to dissimulate for some days, in order that some who had not been baptized might have an opportunity of baptism, re-

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plied: "I have brought them together that they, seeing what others suffer, may be afraid and become less constant in their faith." And though Nicostratus was to be blamed for this — for falsehood is never either right or lawful, and he showed by it that he had but small intention of a holy life, and that some imperfections still lingered in him — he made some amends in this manner. He had a dear friend named Claudius, to whom he related how Sebastian, despising the favour of the emperor and placing himself in manifest danger of death, had declared himself to be a Christian, exhorting all to continue in that faith; together with the wonderful words and miracles which had been wrought. When Claudius heard these things he wondered much, and going to his house he took his two children, one of whom was dropsical and the other a leper, and brought them to the house of Nicostratus.

Here Claudius found a great multitude of Christians, who constantly increased in number, all coming to see Sebastian, now become so favourable to the Christian religion. There was among others a priest named Policarp, who in his priest's robes taught the faith to all those who asked baptism, and afterwards baptized them. Among others the two sons of Claudius were baptized, and at the same time they recovered their health, to the great consolation of all present, but of their father in particular, who also became himself a Christian. The prefect Cromatius sent for Tranquillino, the father of Marcus and Marcelliano, and not knowing that he had become a Christian, asked him if his two sons were still determined to remain Christians, because the thirty days granted to them were past, and the time had come to pronounce judgment upon them. Tranquillino replied: "Blessed are they to be found worthy to die for the love of Jesus Christ, and blessed am I, who by their means have been delivered from the blindness in which I have been so long, adoring false gods who are unworthy of the name of men and much less of being worshipped." "Are you then also a Christian?" asked the prefect. "I am," replied Tranquillino, "because I have seen that Sebastian, holding the favour of

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the emperor of little account, has declared himself to be a Christian, and has spoken marvellous words, confirming them all with stupendous miracles. I have chosen to follow this truth, and to depart from the error in which I have lived until this time."

Cromatius wondered much to hear that Sebastian was a Christian, and said: "It appears also to me a great thing that Sebastian has become a Christian, and I think that a person of so much importance and of such rare qualities would not have believed anything of which he was not certain; still it appears to me a hard thing to believe that one put to death on a cross can be God." "It is more hard to believe," said Tranquillino, "that God could be such as Jove, Venus, Saturn, or Mercury. It is not a hard thing to believe God could die, because He made Himself man to be able to die to give life to mankind. And what glory He laid aside in dying He resumed doubly in rising again, for He did not die to remain subject to death, but to rise glorious on the third day, and after forty days to ascend visibly into heaven, where now He sits on the right hand of the Eternal Father."

These and other words said the good old man to the prefect with so much effect that he, by the help of God, answered: "Great light have your words given me. I see clearly that it is more unworthy of God to sin than to die, understanding that He first became man. I desire now to reflect upon what you have told me, but I pray you that tomorrow you will return to see me secretly, and that you will bring with you Sebastian and some one besides, who thinks in this manner, to speak with me of these things." Tranquillino rejoiced greatly hearing this, and returned to join the Christians; and related to them what had passed, to the great gladness of them all. This night was spent in prayer, praying God that he would grant unto them Cromatius. In the morning early Tranquillino, Sebastian, and Policarp went to find the prefect, and what resulted from it was this: that these three had a long discourse with Cromatius and with one of his sons, named Tiburtius. Now Cromatius had been

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long ill, being lame and swollen, and Sebastian and Policarp making prayers for him, he recovered his health, in consequence of which Cromatius and his son Tiburtius were baptized with all their families. Cromatius had in his house a great multitude of idols, some of which were of great value on account of the precious stones on them as well as for the beauty of the workmanship, but they were all broken in pieces. Afterwards Cromatius resigned his office and often visited the house where the Christians were; and the pope, whose name was Caius, together with the others, rejoiced much at the conversion of Cromatius. And because this was publicly known they felt assured that the ministers of justice would soon come to seize them for martyrdom; by reason of which expectation it was thought best to divide themselves in two parties, and that Sebastian should be at the head of one and Policarp of the other; one part remaining in Rome and the other going away to conceal themselves in some safe place. A noble contest now arose between Sebastian and Policarp as to which should remain in Rome to die first the martyr's death, because each one of them desired this blessing for himself. The Pope Caius decided the question for them, saying the road to heaven was the same for confessors as for martyrs; and he ordered that Policarp should accompany those who were to leave Rome, because being a priest he could administer to them the sacraments; and that Sebastian, who was young and a soldier, should remain to combat for the love of Jesus Christ; and so it was done. Marcus and Marcellianus remained in company with Sebastian, having been ordained deacons by the pope, and Tranquillino their father he ordained priest; and he made Sebastian defender of the church.

The time now drew near when this worthy company were to undergo many torments for the love of Christ; and the first to whom this happy lot fell was Zoe the wife of Nicostratus, who had been cured by Sebastian. This lady was taken while praying at the sepulchre of St. Peter the Apostle, and efforts were made to persuade her to worship a statue of Mars; and because she would not, by order of Flavius

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the prefect she was hanged by the feet, and a fire kindled beneath her with so much smoke that in this suffering she rendered her soul to her Creator, and her body was thrown into the Tiber. When the company of Christians knew this, Tranquillino said to Sebastian: "It is a shame for us that a lady, frail by nature, has gained the crown of glory before us, and therefore I desire to go and keep her company." Having spoken thus, he left his house and went to make prayers at the sepulchre of the Apostle St. Paul, where he was immediately seized and was put to death by means of a mass of stones which were piled upon him; and being dead, his body also was thrown into the Tiber. Nicostratus, the husband of Zoe, and Claudius his friend were also taken while walking on the bank of the river, and after some days, having been assailed, sometimes with threats and sometimes with flatteries, and remaining always constant in the faith, by order of the emperor they were thrown into the Tiber with heavy stones tied about their necks, and thus their freed souls passed to heaven. The Christians had been joined by a wretched man who was a spy while pretending to be a Christian; and he brought accounts of them to the emperor, and by his means Tibertius, the son of Cromatius the prefect, was arrested and beheaded. After him Marcus and Marcellianus were taken, who were cruelly tortured; for, making them stand upright, they fastened them by the feet to a stake and put them to death by throwing lances at them; so that all those who had remained with Sebastian were put to death, some in one manner and some in another.

Sebastian remained alone, and having been made known to the emperor as a Christian, he caused him to be brought before him and reproached him severely, saying to him: "How, Sebastian! is this your return for the confidence I placed in you? I welcomed you to my court; I gave you an honourable office; I placed in your hands the principal force of the empire, making you captain of the first squadron of my army; and you make me this return? Like one deprived of reason you would ruin yourself and me also; from me expect no favour, and for yourself a painful and wretched

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death." To this Sebastian gravely answered: "You have no cause, O Cæsar, to complain of me, since if I have left your service I have not done so for the sake of any emperor or king of this world, but for the love of God, who is King of Heaven and Earth, and is He who is adored by the Christians. The gods whom you worship are made of wood or stone, and they represent the figures of vicious men who are unworthy of the name of men, and much less to be worshipped as gods." The emperor would not hear another word, but ordered that a stake should be erected in the middle of a square, and that Sebastian should be tied to it, and shot by many archers. This soon became known to all the city, and because Sebastian was well known some wondered and others did not believe it; and each one hastened to the square, where was seen the cavalier of Christ, who was conducted to martyrdom by many executioners, with heralds going before who declared him a malefactor and a rebel against the emperor. It was a pitiful sight to see a handsome and noble youth, of good customs and held in high esteem, thus brought to death without having committed any fault.

When Sebastian was brought to the stake he embraced it, and speaking to Jesus Christ, said to Him: "I thank Thee, O my God! that Thou hast led me to this pass. When have I ever merited to imitate Thee in the least thing? Thou for love of me didst die upon the tree, and I for my good am to die fastened to a tree. Thou, Lord, gave Thy life for me, and I now will give mine for love of Thee. I pray Thee, Lord, that Thou wilt accept the service and sacrifice which I make to Thee of myself as willingly as I offer it to Thee." Thus said this valiant cavalier when the executioners had taken off his robes and fastened him to the stake, ordering the crowd to stand aside, and the arrows began to shower upon him.

He continued calling on the holy name of Jesus, which was a wonderful refreshment to him in the midst of such torments. In a short time he was so covered with darts and arrows that he appeared more like a porcupine than a man;

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and so they left him for dead, though in truth he was still alive.

The following night a holy matron came to bury the body, and finding him still alive unfastened him from the stake and brought him to her house, where she had him so carefully tended that he perfectly recovered his health. Here he was visited by many Christians, who counselled him to fly from the fury of Diocletian. But he, most desirous of dying for the love of Jesus Christ, would not go away, but one day, the emperor passing in the street by the house where Sebastian was, he placed himself at the window to see him and to be seen by him.

It chanced that the emperor looked up, saw him, and knew him, and because he thought him to be dead he was amazed and commanded that he should be brought before him, which was done. And the emperor said to him: "Are you Sebastian whom I commanded to be put to death?" "Yes," answered Sebastian, "I am. The life which you ordered should be taken from me Jesus Christ has restored to me that I may tell thee to be no longer His enemy, taking the life of His friends. Consider, oh emperor, that the Christians do not deserve this at your hands, but they always in their prayers pray for the welfare of the empire." The emperor, hearing this, was more enraged with him than before, thinking that on his account many would be converted to the faith of the Christians, and for this reason he had him carried to a house in a secret place, and caused him to be beaten with rods of iron, in which torments he rendered his soul to the Lord. His body was thrown into a ditch, that the Christians might not find it and pay it reverence; but the glorious saint appeared in a dream to a matron called Lucina and gave her notice where his body was, and ordered that it should be removed from that place and receive suitable burial. Lucina did as had been ordered, and when they had found the body it was free from any wound and was all fresh and beautiful; and they buried it in the catacombs in the Appian Way, where a church with his name was afterwards built. This saint is held in rever-

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ence by all the Catholic church in general, and by many churches in particular. There are few cities or countries where there are not either churches or altars where they celebrate special feasts in his memory. Every one honours him for two reasons, one of which is that he suffered two martyrdoms; and though the first did not deprive him of life, it pleased God to take him to Himself by means of the other; so that a grave doctor, called Pietro di Palude, says that Sebastian, having been twice a martyr, has two crowns in heaven. It is also said to have been proved by experience that in times of pestilence he has always aided those who have sought his protection; as is asserted to have happened particularly in the city of Padua, when all Italy being infected with the plague, the people of that city implored his help with processions and prayers, and were delivered from all sickness. The church celebrates the feast of St. Sebastian on the day of his martyrdom, which was on the twentieth of January in the year of our Lord three hundred and one. St. Ambrose makes mention of this saint in his eighteenth psalm; St. Augustine in his sermon on the saints Fabian and Sebastian; St. Gregory in his first book of dialogues, chapter tenth; Paul the deacon in the sixth book of the history of Lombardy, chapter second; also Bede, Usuardus, and many others.

The life of Saint Policarp, bishop and martyr, disciple of Saint John the Evangelist.

ST. PAUL recommended Titus his disciple to withdraw himself from the conversation of the heretics, because from it arose much harm and evil. This charge was inviolably observed by Policarp, the most holy martyr, who could not endure heretics in any manner. Once, being in Rome, he was asked by a great heretic named Marcion if he knew him, to whom he replied: "I know thee for the first-born of the devil." St. Jerome wrote of this saint, and

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Eusebius of Cæsarea, and other authors, from whom it may be gathered that his life and martyrdom was in this fashion.

Policarp was a disciple of St. John the Evangelist, by him he was ordained priest and consecrated Bishop of Smyrna; he went to Rome in the time of Pope Anicetus to discuss some questions respecting the manner of celebrating Easter.

He converted in Rome many heretics, disciples of Marcion and of Valentinus. He afterwards returned to his bishopric in Asia in the time that Marcus Aurelius Verus, who was called Antoninus, was Emperor of Rome, with Lucius Aurelius Commodus his brother, who instigated the fourth persecution against the Christians, which being carried on in Asia with much rigour, reached the city of Smyrna.

Here was the holy Bishop Policarp, who was as much disliked by the Jews and Gentiles, of whom there were many in that city, as he was beloved by the Christians. He was accused to the proconsul, who commanded that he should be arrested. Policarp was at this time away from the city, having withdrawn into a certain solitary place to flee from the persecution, which he did at the entreaties of some of his friends. But seeing that they sought him in that place, he went to meet those who came to take him; and without change of countenance but with a joyful face, said: "The will of God be done." He invited the soldiers to rest themselves and gave them food; and while they were eating he knelt in prayer, offering to God his life and all that he had done in it, and asked His help on this occasion; and afterwards went voluntarily with those who had come to take him. When he was in the presence of the proconsul he began to speak to him mildly, saying that he ought to consider his extreme age and have pity on himself and adore the gods whom the Roman emperors worshipped, that so he might escape death. Policarp replied: "Eighty and six years have I served Jesus Christ, and His service I have found always good. You ask me to leave His service now, when but a few days of life remain to me? This is not a reasonable demand." "You do not remember," said the proconsul, "that I have fire in which I can cause you to be burned."

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"I do not fear your fire," said Policarp, "which will last but a moment. The fire which I fear will endure forever, which is the fire of hell, in which will be burned all those who worship gods of wood and stone." There were present many Jews and Gentiles, who, hearing what the saint said and seeing with what zeal he was animated, began to make a tumult and cry out: "This is he who turns this city upside down, desiring they should worship the Crucified. Take his life, or we are all lost." When the proconsul saw such a tumult, he sentenced Policarp to be burnt alive. His enemies rejoiced beyond measure, but in particular the Jews, who had a great quantity of wood brought immediately, being too impatient to wait for the hour when the saint was to be burned. The holy bishop was conducted to a square, and he himself took off his robes amid the compassion and tears of all Christians who were present at that spectacle. He then made a devout prayer to God, thanking Him that he was counted worthy to lay down his life for His love and to be of the company of holy martyrs. The executioner desired to nail him to the stake, but the holy bishop said to him: "Thou art not right, because the sentence which the proconsul has pronounced against me says only that I shall be burned alive; if thou seekest to do this from fear that I shall fly from the fire, thou needst not doubt that I love it and desire it more than thou canst think possible. I have longed for it all my life; now that I have found it do not suppose that I desire to escape it." Notwithstanding this the executioner fastened him to the stake with a rope and kindled the fire. But the flames increasing spared the saint and made, as it were, a tabernacle around him in which he shone like gold, as was seen by all present. The executioners, seeing that the fire did not harm the saint, struck him with lances from a distance, and thus he rendered his soul to the Lord, his body remaining without any injury from the fire. After his death the Jews succeeded in persuading the proconsul that he should not consent that the body of Policarp should pass into the hands of the Christians, lest they should leave adoring the Crucified and adore him. This people did not

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understand that the Christians honour Jesus Christ in one manner and His saints in another, honouring Christ as God, but the saints as the servants of God. The proconsul ordered that the dead body of Policarp should be again burned, when the flames which had spared him in life spared him no longer, he being dead. This blessed body was burned, but nevertheless the Christians obtained many fragments of his bones, which were and are held in great reverence. A letter is also held in high esteem which he wrote to the Philippians, full of sound doctrine and heavenly wisdom.

The church celebrates the feast of St. Policarp on the twenty-sixth of January, which was the day of his martyrdom, in the year of our Lord one hundred and sixty-eight, Marcus Aurelius Verus Antoninus and Lucius Aurelius Commodus being emperors, as said above. The life of St. Policarp was written at length by Nicephorus in the third book, chapters thirty and thirty-four.

The life of Saint Paula.

"IF all the members of my body," says St. Jerome, "were tongues, and each could speak with a human voice, they would not suffice to tell fully the praises of the virtues of St. Paula. She was noble by birth, but much more noble by holiness. She was distinguished in other days for wealth and the gifts of fortune, but now she is illustrious and famous for having made herself poor for the love of Jesus Christ.

"She came of the race of the Scipios and Gracchi, a most noble Roman house; but she left Rome for Bethlehem and changed her superb palace for a cabin made of clay. We do not weep to have lost her, but we thank God that we have been worthy to have had her in this world, and that we now have her before the Lord, in whose presence all things live; and though the world has lost her, heaven has gained her. I call to witness Jesus Christ and His holy angels, and in particular the guardian angel of this won-

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derful lady, that I say nothing for the sake of praising her, but only to record the truth. This is she who was praised by all the world, who was the marvel of the priests, desired by the societies of monks and nuns, and was wept for by the poor.

"The promise made by God to His servants has been fulfilled to St. Paula, for she who despised the honour and glory of only one city is now held in honour by all the world for the fame of her sanctity. Those who come to Jerusalem from all parts of the earth find nothing more wonderful than to see St. Paula, for as the sun obscures the stars by its splendour, so this saint exceeds in virtue all other saints of her time by the greatness of her humility, for she was the most humble among the humble. But the more she humbled herself the more the Lord exalted her, and in avoiding the glory of this world she gained the glory of heaven."

This saint was given in marriage to Iosocchio, a most noble baron, who descended from Julius Cæsar, the first Roman emperor. She had one son and four daughters: the son was named Iosocchio, like his father; the daughters were Blesila, Ruffina, and Paulina who died young; the other was Eustochia, to whom this history is dedicated, and who now lives among the virgins, a precious pearl of the church. The husband of St. Paula dying, she wept for him so much that it was feared she would die with him; and as he left her a rich and noble palace with much wealth, the holy lady devoted herself to providing for the wants of the poor.

Who can relate how great was the goodness of that precious heart, which gave to all, even to those whom she had never seen? What sick were not cared for by her bounty? What poor who died were not robed in the garments she provided? She sought out all the poor of the city so diligently that she thought it a shame for herself if there were any who were not assisted by her charity. She took the clothes of her own children to give to the poor, and when her relatives reproved her she replied that she laid up a good inheritance for them in the mercy of Jesus Christ.

This saint, being visited by many through respect to her

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noble birth, could not bear it with patience, and fled as much as possible from the society of those who flattered her. Some bishops went to Rome to treat of negotiations relating to the eastern and western empires: among them were Paulinus, Bishop of Antioch, and Epiphanius, Bishop of Costantia in Cyprus.

This good lady lodged Epiphanius in her own house and sent Paulinus many presents in the houses of others; and her love to God much increased through her acquaintance with these saints, as did also her desire for a solitary life, so that she made a resolution to leave Rome. The day of her departure having come she went to the shore accompanied by many people, and by her children, who endeavoured with tears to change her resolution; and she passed on board the ship and the sails were spread to the wind. Iosocchio, her son, who was but a little child, was on the river's bank, and with his arms stretched towards her begged her not to desert him; Ruffina also, her daughter, who was affianced but not married, entreated her to at least delay her departure until her marriage; but the holy lady raised her eyes to heaven, without shedding a tear, and conquered her love to her children by her love to God. There can be no more fond mothers than those who have so well learned to be the servants of God, and the greatest pain of slavery is that the parent is separated from the children; but nevertheless St. Paula bore this trial to human nature with fortitude and constancy, consoling herself with Eustochia her daughter, the companion of her soul and her journey. As the ship passed through the water all those who were in her company watched the land, but she turned her eyes the other way, that she might not see those whom she could not see without pain; for this saint did not love her children coldly even though she abandoned them; her affection for them was so great that she deprived herself of her wealth in her lifetime to give to them. While sailing on the sea the winds seemed slow to her, and she regretted every delay, in consequence of her great desire to see Jerusalem and the other holy places. The ship touched at Cyprus, where the holy

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Bishop Epiphanius received her with great joy and detained her ten days; not that he might welcome her with the honours he could have desired, but that she might, as she wished, visit the monasteries of that country. In Antioch she was also detained some days by the attentions of the holy Bishop Paulinus. It was midwinter, and yet she who had always been accustomed to go in chariots and litters, urged by divine love, took this journey on a miserable mule.

When she reached Jerusalem she visited the holy places with so much fervour that she would have found it difficult to have left the first, except to visit the others. She went to Mount Calvary, where the Lord suffered death for man, and venerated it as if the Lord had been there present and she beheld Him with her bodily eyes; she then entered the Holy Sepulchre and kissed the stone which the angel rolled away from the door; and all the city of Jerusalem can bear witness to her sighs and tears in these holy places. She ascended Mount Sion, where she was shown the column to which the Lord was bound at the time of His Passion; she saw besides the table at which the Lord partook of the Last Supper, and the room where the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles. She afterwards went to Bethlehem and entered into the cabin where the Saviour was born; and she made an oath — "I hearing her," says St. Jerome — that with the eyes of faith she saw the little child Jesus wrapped in poor clothes, as the Magi had seen Him; and with mingled tears and joy she said: "God save thee, Bethlehem, and thou, house of clay where was born the Living Bread that came down from heaven." Departing from Bethlehem she went to the Mount of Olives and saw the sepulchre of Lazarus and the house of the holy sisters Mary and Martha, and afterwards to the desert, where she saw a great number of holy hermits; and forgetting that she was a woman and must have consideration for her bodily weakness, she would have decided to remain there if she had not a more fervent desire to dwell in Bethlehem, where she went and lived three years in a small house, until she had caused a monastery to be built, and a house where pilgrims might be lodged who

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went to the Holy Land; and it was placed on the spot where the glorious Virgin and St. Joseph could find no room. Having now recounted the journeys which the blessed Paula made, accompanied by her daughter and by many other virgins, I desire to say something of her wonderful works, calling on God as witness and judge that I record no more than the truth.

I will speak first of the purity of her life, which was such that while she lived at Rome she was an example to all matrons, giving none occasion to speak ill of her; and she was the same after she became a nun. Her humility was so great that those who saw her in Bethlehem could not believe she was the same one who had been so distinguished; but she might have been supposed the least of her own servants, such was the simplicity of her dress, the modesty of her speech, of her manners, and even of her movements. From the day of her husband's death to the close of her life she would never eat in company with any man, however holy he might be. To the poor she gave alms; the rich she exhorted to good works; and if by chance any one sought to persuade her to give less in charity, saying that she and her family might come to want, she would reply: "The Lord is my witness that I am ready to become a beggar, and when I am dead to be buried in robes given in alms, for my Master who is so rich lived a life of poverty, and at His death was buried in a borrowed sepulchre."

She was no friend to spending money on gems which perish with this world, but on those living stones which walk the earth, of which is built the city of the celestial King, as may be read in the Apocalypse. And while she constantly exercised herself in almsgiving, she did not therefore neglect to do penance and afflict the body; unlike those who are at the same time charitable and unclean, who appear white outwardly, but within are full of dead men's bones. On the contrary this saint practised so many fasts and austerities that they caused her many infirmities; she ate no oil with her food except on feast days; and it may well be believed that one who from abstinence ate no oil still less

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drank wine or ate butter, fish, milk, honey, eggs, or other things pleasing to the taste. This is not the custom of many who consider themselves very abstinent in not eating meat, while they eat as much of these things as their bodies can hold.

It is usually the case that envy persecutes virtue as arrows strike high mountains. Through envy was the Son of God crucified, and through envy Cain killed his brother Abel, and all saints have been envied. And though St. Paula was not proud of her exalted virtue, God permitted that she should be persecuted by the envious; and St. Jerome relates that he once said to her that in some cases it was well to fly from the envious, as Jacob did from Esau his brother, and as David from King Saul, when the one retired to Mesopotamia and the other to the country of the Gentiles, choosing rather to be in subjection to enemies than to the envious. She replied that it might be well to do so if the devil did not persecute the servants of God in all parts of the world, and did not follow them in all places where they might go.

"I am constrained," she said, "by love of the Holy Land, and I know that I cannot find my Bethlehem in any other part of the world; I seek to conquer envy with patience, pride with humility, and evil with good, as the apostle counsels. Let our consciences be well assured that we do not sin, and then the afflictions of this world are cause of thankfulness and reward."

This saint built four monasteries, one for men and three for women. These last had separate rooms for eating and labouring, but all assembled together to say the divine office and the psalms. All wore the same dress, all were equal except in their offices, which were bestowed according to their excellence of life or superior virtue. None were permitted to be idle; some spun, some sewed, some laboured, and all were separated from the society and acquaintance of men.

St. Paula governed all three of these monasteries with much prudence and skill. If she saw any one curiously dressed, she would reprove such levity with a serious face,

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saying that too much care for the body would cause neglect of the soul. She punished with rigor unseemly words, saying that women ought to avoid them like serpents. She abhorred theft, however small, like a great sacrilege, saying that what is held as a small sin among those who live in the world is a great sin in one of a religious profession. She was very compassionate towards the sick, and took great pains that they should be well cared for; but the compassion which she had for others became cruelty when she was ill herself. She had a serious infirmity, and in consequence the physicians advised her to drink a little wine, lest she should become dropsical. "I," says St. Jerome, "secretly prayed the holy Bishop Epiphanius that he would go to visit her and command her to obey the physicians. She, understanding why he came, said with a smile: 'This is the hand of St. Jerome;' and as Epiphanius counselled her to follow his advice for many reasons, when he had parted from her I asked if his admonitions had succeeded, and he answered: 'My success has been such that she has almost persuaded me in my old age not to drink wine.'

"I do not record this," says St. Jerome, "to praise indiscreet penitence, for the scripture says: 'Take no burden thou canst not bear,' but only to show the fervour and the faith of this holy woman."

She was at last seized with a dangerous illness, or rather she found that which her soul desired, which was to leave the world and pass to heaven. In the time of her illness the great piety of her holy daughter was manifested, who undertook all the offices of the altar. She often passed from the bedside of her mother to the grotto where the Lord was born and offered prayers with many tears, entreating the Lord not to deprive her of her beloved companion, since she could have no desire to live after her death, except to be laid in the same sepulchre. Oh, miserable condition of humanity where the just and the unjust, the good and the evil, the clean and the unclean, alike die and return to dust! If a living faith did not raise us to heaven with the hope of the eternal life promised to our souls, we could not endure

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the thought. The saint, knowing that the time of her departure was at hand, repeated many verses of David, in which she expressed her readiness to depart. Being asked if she felt pain, she replied: "I feel nothing that gives me pain;" and having said this she made the sign of the cross on her mouth and rendered her soul to the Lord.

As soon as St. Paula was dead many nuns who were there present sang hymns and psalms in different languages; and as soon as her death was known through Palestine many came from all the cities to her burial. Not a single monk, however retired or solitary, was absent. The Bishop of Jerusalem and all the principal inhabitants of the city took the holy body on their own shoulders, and the other priests and monks accompanied them with psalms and candles until it was laid in the place where the Lord was born; and no one departed from the tomb all that week, but remained singing psalms and hymns, in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. The widows and the poor lamented loudly the loss of their mother and their comforter, and Eustochia threw herself beside her mother's body and begged to be buried with her. "O Eustochia," says St. Jerome, "console yourself and let us all be consoled, since we know that this glorious saint lives and reigns in heaven; let us weep and lament her absence no more, lest we seem to envy her glory. O blessed Eustochia, rejoice in the Lord, since thy holy mother has heard His voice like the patriarch Abraham, and has departed from her country and gone to that revealed to her by God; and as Jeremiah said of the just, she has fled from Babylon to save her soul. She is of the city of the Lord, having together with many virgins dwelt where He was born; she has left this small Bethlehem and gone to reign in heaven. I have written this treatise for thy consolation, feeling the same sorrow in my own heart. It is indeed true that many times when I have taken my pen to write I have felt unequal to the task; it has fallen from my hand and I have bathed the paper with my tears. Rest in God, O blessed Paula, and strengthen the extreme old age of Jerome by thy prayers." The same holy doctor wrote an epitaph on the

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sepulchre of St. Paula, which was this: "She who derived her lineage on her father's side from Agamemnon, and on her mother's from the Scipios and the Gracchi, was named Paula and is buried here. She was the mother of the saintly Eustochia, and the first of the Roman senate who came to Bethlehem to follow the poverty of Jesus Christ."

Over the entrance of the cave he placed another epitaph, which was this: —

"Within is the sepulchre of Saint Paula, who left Rome, her children, her kindred, and all her riches, for love of Jesus Christ. Her body reposes in earth, her soul in heaven."

The death of this blessed saint was on Saturday the twenty-seventh of January, at the hour of sunset, in the time of the Emperor Honorius. She led a religious life in Rome for five years after her husband's death, and in Bethlehem twenty-six years, eight months, and twenty-one days.

She died in the year of the Lord four hundred and eleven.

The life of Saint Ignatius, bishop and martyr, disciple of Saint John the Evangelist.

THE Apostle Paul, speaking of the sufferings of the martyrs, of which they had already experienced some portion, says, writing to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians iv): "We are made a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men;" which is to say that the Gentiles, when they celebrated their festivals, caused those condemned to death, and among them many Christians, to be devoured by wild beasts in an amphitheatre, all the people coming to behold. Men hastened to see such sights, however bloody and cruel, while angels rejoiced to see the joy and courage with which the martyrs bore their sufferings for the love of Jesus Christ. One of those in whom this was verified was St. Ignatius, who was devoured by lions in presence of all the Roman people on a certain festival which was celebrated at Rome. His life is written by Simeon Metaphrastes in these words.

"Trajan the Emperor of Rome having obtained a great

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victory over the Scythians, a ferocious people, his triumph was glorious, and he thought himself highly favoured by the gods, by whom he supposed himself to have been assisted to obtain it.

"Seeing that the Christians were opposed to this — not adoring the gods themselves, but seeking to dissuade others from doing them reverence — he began to persecute them, holding it certain that he had by the assistance of the gods obtained a greater victory. He sent edicts and proclamations to all lands subject to the empire that the Christians should be arrested, and that those who would not worship the idols should be put to death with exquisite tortures.

"A great persecution then arose against the Catholic Church, and it chanced that Trajan was in Antioch putting himself in readiness to make war upon the Persians. Ignatius was the bishop of this city, who, according to the opinion of Metaphrastes and some other writers, was the little child whom Jesus Christ called to Him when He taught His disciples a lesson of humility, saying to them that whosoever sought to enter into the kingdom of heaven must become humble as this little child. This happened at the beginning of the life of Ignatius, foretelling as it were what should be its close. After Jesus Christ rose to heaven Ignatius joined himself to St. John the Evangelist, and became his disciple, in company with Policarp, who was Bishop of Smyrna and a martyr. Ignatius gained so much wisdom, taught by his good master, that he was ordained by him priest, and was consecrated Bishop of Antioch, and was the third who after St. Peter governed the church with much care and diligence. His chief aim was to convert the souls of the Gentiles to Christianity. While Trajan was in this city he heard of him and commanded that he should be conducted to his presence, and when he came he said to him: 'Art thou he who not only has despised our imperial commandment, but has even forbidden that our immortal gods should be served and worshipped, and ordered that a crucified man should be acknowledged as God and should receive divine honour?' 'I,' said Ignatius, 'am he who has done all these things

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which thou hast said; it grieves me that thou callest wood and stone gods, not knowing the one only God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, and His only Son Jesus Christ, whose kingdom shall know no end; and if thou, O Caesar, wilt worship Him, thou mayest be assured that thy empire, thy sceptre, and thy crown shall be much more firm and stable.'

"'Lay aside such arguments,' said Trajan; 'and if thou wilt do something pleasing to me, sacrifice to our gods, and thou shalt be my friend, thou shalt be the priest of Jove, and shalt have many rewards and great honours.' 'A good exchange that would be indeed,' said Ignatius, 'if being a priest of the living God, to whom every day I offer sacrifice upon His altar, I should seek to become the priest of a demon. One thing I desire thee to know, oh emperor; not only thy offers and promises would not be sufficient to change my determination, but if thou shouldst decide to throw me to the wild beasts, to crucify me, to take my life by fire or sword, neither these nor all the torments which thou canst inflict upon me will induce me to leave the worship of the living and true God to adore dead and false gods.'

"There were present at this discourse many priests of the idols, who said to Ignatius: 'What words are these, oh shameless madman? We call Jove and the other gods immortal, and do not, like thee, confess that our God was put to death upon a cross.' From this Ignatius took occasion to deride their gods, and at the same time to teach them the true faith, and said to them: 'The God whom I adore was and is immortal, but He made Himself mortal for the welfare and salvation of men. He died by His own will, and was buried; but we also declare that He rose the third day by His own power, and rose to heaven, opening its door that even men, to whom sin had closed it, might enter therein; so that all those have entered who have confessed Him as God, and kept the laws of the holy scriptures. This cannot be said of any of your gods, but in truth that they were most vicious men, and known to be such, and they all died in the same manner they had lived. Jove has his sepulchre in Candia; Esculapius was killed by an arrow;

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the ashes of Venus repose in the island of Passo; Hercules burnt himself in a great fire; and these things being true, as every one knows, I do not see how you can call your gods immortal, nor with what reason you should be scandalized that I call them dead gods.' The emperor, having heard this, would not allow the discourse to continue or the conversation to go on, fearing that it would result in ignominy and shame for his gods, and in glory and honour for Christ the God of the Christians. He ordered that Ignatius should be thrown into an obscure prison, and he consulted with his senators by what death Ignatius should die; and it was determined that he should be devoured by wild beasts. And since they doubted if this could be accomplished in Antioch, Ignatius having gained so much reputation and honour among the Christians, to avoid difficulty it was ordered that he should be carried to Rome, and there, in company with other malefactors, should be devoured by wild beasts, so that his memory should perish. This resolution being taken, the emperor sent for him once more, and after having caressed him, thinking that his imprisonment might perhaps have changed his mind, tried again to persuade him to adore his gods. But seeing that he was even more firm and constant than before, he caused the sentence pronounced against him to be read to him — that he should be carried to Rome and there thrown to the wild beasts. There were some Christians who had remained a long time in prison who were uncertain whether they should be put to death, and when they heard the sentence of his condemnation they congratulated Ignatius, who showed his joy in his countenance, and together they returned thanks to God. He himself put on the chains he was to wear during the journey.

"He then spoke with some of his familiar friends, taking leave of them with many tears, and commended the church and them to God. There was no delay in putting the order of the emperor into execution, and Ignatius made the journey on foot, and went first to Seleucia, and there entering into a ship he arrived at Smyrna. Here he wrote, this being conceded to him by those who conducted him, to Policarp,

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in which letter he gave him tidings of himself and recommended to him his church in Antioch. As soon as Policarp received the letter he went with some priests and other devout persons to visit the holy martyr. Policarp and Ignatius were dear friends, and when they saw each other they embraced with mingled joy and sorrow, and they said many loving words with tears accompanied by giving of thanks and celestial peace. 'How, Ignatius,' said Policarp, 'is it that thou hast thus taken this step of going before me to martyrdom? What prayers and vows hast thou made to God that He has granted thee this favour? Ah my brother! teach them to me, that even I may deserve to see myself in the same condition in which thou now findest thyself; but I well know that my works are not such that I merit to obtain from God the blessing of suffering for the love of Him.' 'Do not doubt, Policarp, my brother,' replied Ignatius; 'your hour will indeed come when it shall please God, who knows that His church has so much need of you; but when you shall have well founded and ordered it there is laid up for you also a crown of martyrdom with which you shall be crowned, as according to His mercy it has pleased Him now to crown me.' The priests and others who had come in company with Policarp now drew near to the holy martyr, and kneeling down, some kissed his hands, some his robes, and some his chains, doing so with much pity and devotion, seeing that he went willingly to die for the love of Jesus Christ. Ignatius was detained here some days because they waited for fair weather to set sail, and he wrote in this time many letters to the different churches, full of love and divine fervour, one of which he sent before him to the Christians at Rome. And in that he charged them that they should put no hindrance in the way of his martyrdom. 'From Syria,' wrote Ignatius, 'I go even to Rome, fighting day and night, by land and sea, with ten leopards, who are the ten soldiers deputed to be my guard. To do good to such as these causes them to become worse; their malignity teaches me to be patient, but not for this do I consider myself holy. When I shall be set free from these wild beasts,

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I know that I shall be given in prey to other cruel beasts who await me, and I hope they may be most fierce against me, and not spare my life as they have spared that of other martyrs. This may God grant. Indeed I am determined that if they will not come to me I will go to them; if they will spare my life I will attack them and enrage them, that they may tear me in pieces and devour me. Let it not grieve you, my children, that I thus speak, for I know the blessing of suffering for the love of Jesus Christ. Now can I say that I begin to be His disciple, because I would willingly suffer fire, cross, savage beasts, being torn asunder, or that all the torments with which devils torment should come upon me, if I may but be counted worthy to enjoy Jesus Christ.' These and other words he spoke in that place, by which could be seen his fervent desire to suffer martyrdom. Fair weather for sailing having now come, he took leave of Policarp, and entering into the ship, they passed to Troas, Macedonia, and other ports, where he was visited by many Christians who condoled with him. But he spoke such words to them that those who came to visit him feeling compassion for him parted from him with a holy envy. He arrived at last in Rome, and was consigned to the prefect by those who had brought him prisoner.

"The prefect, having seen the order of the emperor, waited for a day on which some feast was celebrated to execute it. The solemn day having at last come, the holy bishop was placed in the theatre, where a great multitude had assembled, having heard that the Bishop of Syria was to fight with the beasts; and Ignatius, standing in the centre of the theatre, raised his voice and said: 'Roman men, you who stand here present at this spectacle, know that I am not brought to this place for any crime which I have committed, but in order that thus I may deserve to enjoy the glory of God, for whose love I am taken. I am wheat of His field, and I must be ground by the teeth of the lions that I may be made bread meet for His table.' The martyr having said thus, some lions were let in upon him, who instantly devoured him, so that there remained

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nothing of him but some of the larger bones; God so permitting, to grant the prayers of His martyr and concede to him the favour that he had so earnestly asked — that the wild beasts might not spare his life. Night having come, the Christians to whom he had written letters gathered up the bones which the lions had left and laid them in a decent place outside the city, and afterwards carried them to Antioch. Having been informed of the constancy of Ignatius in his martyrdom, and certified that the Christians gave no molestation nor did harm to any one, and that they observed the laws of good government, and that they had been observed only to rise early in the morning to offer prayers to Christ their God, that they were abstinent, pious, peaceful, charitable, and pure, Trajan commanded that they should be no more persecuted or tormented, but only that they should not be permitted to fill public offices.

"In this manner Ignatius was of service to the Christians, not only in life but also in death."

The third bishop after St. Paul in Antioch, who was Nicephorus Callistus, wrote of this glorious saint that he conversed often with some of the apostles. As he was once in prayer he was rapt in the spirit and he saw many angels in heaven, and he heard them sing the praises of the most holy Trinity in the choral manner — first some of them sang and then others responded. This vision was the cause that St. Ignatius afterwards ordered that in his church the psalms and hymns should be sung in this same manner, which custom was adopted by all the universal church, Pope Damasus having particularly ordered it. The feast of St. Ignatius is celebrated on the first day of February, which was the day of his martyrdom, in the year of the Lord one hundred and nine, Trajan being emperor.

Eusebius makes mention of St. Ignatius in the third book of his ecclesiastical history at the thirty-sixth chapter; St. Jerome in the book of illustrious men at the twenty-sixth chapter; Cassiodorus in the tenth of the Tripartite at the ninth chapter; also Bede, Usuardus, and other authors of martyrologies.

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The life of Saint Thomas of Aquinas, doctor of the church, confessor and friar of the order of Saint Domenico; as related by learned authors and by the friar Laurentius Surius, Carthusian.

ST. THOMAS came of a noble and illustrious race, and the family of Aquinas in Italy from whom he descended still remains so. His father's name was Landolfo and his mother's Theodora; his birthplace was Naples. It happened that before his birth a holy man, who led the life of a hermit in a mountain of that country and who was great both in fame and good works, went to seek Theodora in one of her castles, called Roccasecca, and said to her with the spirit of prophecy: "Rejoice, Signora Theodora, for you shall have a son, whose name shall be Thomas, who shall be famous throughout all the world for his life and his doctrine; and he shall follow the rule of the order of St. Domenico." She, hearing this, raised her eyes to heaven and said: "God's will be done, and His name be ever blessed."

The child having been born, and the nurse being one day about to place him in his bath, he picked up a piece of paper which was on the ground; the nurse tried to take the paper from his hand, but the child cried so bitterly that she let him keep it and told his mother, who came desiring to see what the paper was; and taking it by force from his hand, she saw that on it was written, "Ave Maria;" and because he cried she gave it back to him. When he had it again in his hand he put it in his mouth and swallowed it, so it should not be taken from him again; thus giving food for wonder to many and for consideration to the wise. Before he was five years old they had the habit of giving him a book whenever he cried, and as soon as it was in his hands he was quieted, and took great pleasure in turning over the leaves. When he was five years old his father sent him to the monastery of St. Benedict, on Mount Cassino, that he might learn letters and good customs from a monk of that monastery, who had special charge of him. The child often

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asked this monk: "Tell me, father, what God is;" and all that the monk answered him he laid up in his heart. There were many other children in this monastery, sons of the principal people of Italy, and if Thomas saw any one of them disobedient or troublesome, he avoided his society in such a manner that all those who were his friends were known to be good. He spoke very little, which was his habit all his life, and there was never seen in him any of the follies of youth. He had the custom from his childhood of retiring every day, and for a long time, for prayer. He remained at Mount Cassino until he was ten years old, when his father brought him back to Naples, that he might pursue his studies. It was wonderful to behold the progress that he made in a short time in grammar, rhetoric, dialectics, and other liberal arts; so that it was commonly said in the city that Thomas would astonish the age by his wisdom. He always took great care to avoid evil company, but sought diligently that of the good, and willingly associated and made friends with them, declaring that if bad company is hurtful good is to be desired.

He once argued for a long time with a monk of San Domenico, called Fra Giovanni di San Giuliano, a most holy man. He, considering the wisdom, station, and intellect of Thomas, persuaded him to leave the world and devote himself to a religious life; it required but little persuasion to induce him to do this because it was his own desire. And so, at the age of thirteen years, holding of small account the illustrious race of which he was born or the riches, pomp, and grandeur of his father's house, he assumed the habit of the order of San Domenico, an example in himself of the words of David: "I have chosen rather to be poor and despised in the house of the Lord than to dwell in the house of sinners, and to be by them favoured and honoured." He received the habit from the hands of Fra Tommaso da Lentino, who was at that time prior in Naples and afterwards Patriarch of Jerusalem. The news of this spread through all the nobility of Naples, and all wondered that this had been done by a youth of such rare wisdom and high hopes.

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Some praised him and took example from him, and many imitated him; and so both men and women of his age entered into religious orders. Others blamed him, saying he was too young to have made his choice so soon, and they even blamed the prior and all the convent for giving him the habit. His mother, though a holy woman, allowed herself to be carried away by her maternal feelings, and showed much displeasure; so that accompanied, as was suitable, by one of her own rank, she returned to Naples, and went to the convent of San Domenico and demanded permission to see and speak with her son; but the brothers, fearing that the prayers and tears of his mother, which she shed abundantly, might shake the resolution of the youth — though she assured them she did not wish to interfere with his choice, even saying that she knew before his birth that he would be a monk, as the hermit had prophesied — would not suffer her to see him, but sent him first to Rome, and from there to Paris. His mother went to Rome, hoping to find him there, but when she found that Thomas had left she began to lose her patience.

Thomas had two brothers, one named Landolfo and the other Arnoldo, and both were cavaliers and were in the army in the service of the Emperor Frederic the Second; to these the mother wrote, and prayed them to use every precaution that Thomas should not quit Italy to go to France. When these two brothers received this intelligence from their mother, they were highly indignant and related these facts to the emperor, who granted them permission to place a guard in every place by which they thought their brother might pass.

This diligence was not in vain, for in a short time they found him and conducted him to his mother, who rejoiced greatly to see him; but the Domenican monks were not a little displeased at having lost a youth of so much promise. The mother left nothing unsaid to persuade Thomas to lay aside the monastical habit which he always wore, but he constantly became more fixed in his resolution, for which reason they shut him up in a fortress, setting a guard over

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him until his relations should consult together and decide what was best to be done. At this time the fathers of San Domenico complained to the pope, who was then Innocent the Fourth, of the wrong that had been done them, and the pope, considering them in the right, wrote to the Emperor Frederic respecting these things. The emperor, understanding the desire of the pontiff, ordered that all those who had withheld St. Thomas from his family should be put in prison, though they were afterwards liberated.

The brothers of the saint went to see him and endeavoured to persuade him to yield obedience to his mother's wishes. But seeing it all in vain, and that the youth remained constant, they brought his two sisters to see if they could perhaps induce him to change his mind. The sisters came to speak with him, but the result was to strengthen his resolution; and one of his sisters from that day laid aside the rich and costly dresses which she wore, and clothing herself in a much more honest fashion, went to profess herself a nun in a convent; and neither her mother nor her brothers were able to prevent her. For this reason the two brothers became very angry with Thomas, and going to the fortress where he was confined, they said to him many abusive and insulting words, and taking the habit which he wore, tore it in pieces.

The saint bore all this with much patience, and when his brothers had gone, he took the pieces of the robe, and joining them as well as he could, put it on again. It may well be imagined that these insults of his brothers were pearls to adorn the crown of his patience. These brothers sought every day some means by which they could make him change his mind, and having heard of a lady of that country of great beauty and very eloquent, they sought her out, and persuaded her to go to find Thomas and to gain his love by her caresses and fair words.

She promised to do her best, and went to the place where this saintly youth was, dressed with great splendour, and with false smiles made him all the flattering speeches in her power, and many more suggested to her by the devil.

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When Thomas saw himself thus assailed, he raised his eyes and his heart to heaven and asked help of Christ. His prayer was short, but nevertheless it gave him so much heart that he took a lighted torch, and ran after the woman, who fled with more fear than she had entered with shame. The saint closed the door, and with the same torch drew a cross upon the wall, and kneeling down before it, asked the protection of God with many tears. It is said that from this day St. Thomas avoided as much as possible the society of women, and unless they came on affairs of great importance he fled from them as if they had been serpents. He remained thus imprisoned for two whole years, and was occasionally visited by Fra Giovanni da San Giuliano, who was he who first persuaded him to a religious life; and he brought him in secret a monk's habit under his own, which he took off and gave to Thomas. At last his mother, fearing to incur the anger of God, ordered that they should take him by a ladder from a window, she pretending to know nothing about it; and some friars awaited him, who took him immediately to Rome. From Rome they sent him, after a few days, to Paris, and he finally stopped at Cologne in Germany, where was Albertus Magnus, the first man of his time in human and divine learning, and he had him for his master, in common with many other disciples. Thomas astonished all the other scholars because he spoke little, and because he was very large and stout, and they called him the dumb ox. His master was of another opinion, because having once heard him in a disputation, which he made rather from obedience than of his own will, he was astonished at the acuteness of his intellect, and said to his other disciples: "You call Thomas the 'dumb ox'; you are mistaken. I tell you that some day he will low so loud that all the world will hear." He was from that day much esteemed both by his master and his fellow disciples, though he always considered himself as the least among them. Having learned what was sufficient of theology, he returned to Paris, by order of his master Albertus Magnus; and here he was made Master of Arts, and read some lessons in public

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with much learning. He adopted in his lectures a particular method, and confirmed his words by such forcible arguments that all knew that his intellect was illumined by the special grace of God. After he had read these lectures, the master of the principal school of Paris, knowing his great skill and rare talent, gave orders to the prior of his convent that Thomas should receive a doctor's degree. When he heard this he declined the rank with much humility, saying that he was not worthy of it, or of a suitable age, for he was not then thirty years old. Being of this mind, one evening he went to sleep with his eyes full of tears, and there appeared to him one who asked him the reason of his sadness and tears. Thomas replied, because they had appointed him to a rank of which he was unworthy.

"Accept it," said the old man, "without fear. God is pleased thou shouldst accept it in obedience to thy superiors. And for a sign that this is so, when thou shalt have to receive the rank of doctor, take for thy theme and subject that verse of David which says: 'Thou givest the earth rain from heaven;'" thus giving him to understand that the principal part of his wisdom was given him from above. It chanced some time afterwards that he found himself, at the feast of Christmas, near Rome, in a villa called Molara, with his great friend Cardinal Riccardo. There came here two Jews, the greatest among those who were then dwelling at Rome, and very learned in their sect. The cardinal invited them to an argument with St. Thomas, and they had a great discussion because the Jews said that Christ had not come. But the saint proved clearly, by the authority of the prophets, that the Messiah had come, and that they were misled by the expectation that He was to come with power and majesty, because the prophets speak of two comings, and at the last, when He shall come to judge the quick and the dead, He will come with majesty. At the first He came in humility, for He came to die; and the Jews deceive themselves, thinking He is to come but once, and then with authority and great power. At last he so convinced them by his arguments and authority that he induced them to ask a

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day for consideration, and if then they found no reason to the contrary, they would profess themselves converted to the faith of Christ. St. Thomas spent all that night in prayer, and in the morning the two Jews came and declared themselves Christians in such a manner that it was plain that the prayers of the saint were quite as effectual as his reasons and arguments. In the government of the body he was most temperate; he was never seen idle, and when he rested from writing he read. When he had to read to his scholars he thought over the lecture which he was to read, and all the time which remained he spent in prayer, in which he usually prayed God to illuminate his intellect to understand the truth, both in that which he read and in that which he wrote. If he was ever obliged to remain in conversation or argument with any one, he always tried to say something that might be useful to that person.

He always had the custom, when he was to read, preach, or write, first to kneel down and offer a prayer to God — often with tears — asking His help, knowing that all wisdom and good gifts come from above from the Father of lights. And from this good preparation he found that he understood that which he could not understand before, and that which he already understood he then understood much better. This was the cause of his saying to Fra Reginaldo, his companion, that what he knew he had learned, not so much by his labours, though they had been great, as by his prayers. It would be well if all his disciples, in order to resemble him in something, would imitate him in this, so that their studies might be of more avail; and not, as the Pope St. Leo said, trust too much to their own understanding without seeking aid from God, confessing their weakness, so that the wisdom which should be clear becomes dark to them, which causes them to fall into many errors. St. Thomas usually preached in all places where he went, to the great edification of the people who listened to him.

He often read the book of John Cassian of the collects of the fathers, which custom he took from Father San Domenico.

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St. Thomas did this that his mind might not be wearied by dwelling constantly on high and difficult things, but that, being rested by the clear and plain doctrines of this book, he might be better able to comprehend lessons of greater difficulty. St. Thomas having composed the office of the holy sacrament, by command of Pope Urban the Fourth, and being in Naples kneeling before a crucifix in prayer, the crucifix spoke to him and said: "Well hast thou written of me, O Thomas! What reward askest thou of me?" Thomas answered and said: "O my Lord! I desire no reward but Thyself."

This saint was much inclined to the doctrine of St. Augustine, and always sought to imitate him; and many things happened to him which had also happened to that saint, one of which was that being once dining at the table of St. Louis, King of France, with a cardinal legate of Tuscany and some others, he gave a blow with his hand upon the table, saying: "I have found a conclusive argument against these heretics," and immediately asked for writing materials, noting down that which God had then revealed to him. When this happened at the king's table, the prior of his convent was seated beside him, who seeing and hearing this, pulled his robe and said to him: "Remember, father, that you are at the table of the king, and not at that of your convent." The saint was confused by this and asked pardon, saying that he had forgotten in what place he was. This was the cause of no little wonder to the king, seeing that at his very table this saint was occupied with his studies. It often happened that he was so rapt in spirit that things happened to him difficult to be believed, if they had not been certified by many witnesses. He was once studying with a candle in his hand, and there came to his mind a profound thought, in which he was so much absorbed that the candle, burning down, burned his hand without his being aware of it. Among his other virtues he was most humble, which was shown by what happened to him when he was in Bologna. He was walking in the cloister of his convent, absorbed in meditations on his studies. It happened that a

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friar who was a newcomer was obliged to go into the city to attend to some affairs, and he asked the prior to give him some companion. The prior told him he might take the first friar he met in the convent; and having chanced to meet St. Thomas, he said to him that he was to go with him, for so had the prior commanded. The saint said nothing, but bowing his head went with that father, who gave him much fatigue, making him walk backward and forward wherever he was obliged to go; and often because he did not walk fast enough, he said to him: "Indeed you are a fine companion to help me through all my affairs;" to which the saint made no answer, but endeavoured to walk as fast as possible. But some citizens who knew him, feeling sure that he was walking with such a man as that friar through some mistake, begged the friar to remember who his companion was. When he understood that he was St. Thomas, he was much confused and asked pardon for his mistake; and St. Thomas, being asked why he had not requested the friar to seek another companion, replied: "The state of a good monk has its whole foundation in obedience, and as my prelate commanded thus, it appeared to me not well to do otherwise." This saint was very compassionate towards those who committed even great errors, if they humbled themselves and asked mercy. He held dignities and worldly honours of small account, as was seen when he refused the archbishopric of Naples, which was offered him by Pope Clement the Fourth. When he was in Paris he took much pleasure in visiting the church of St. Dionysius, on account of the numerous bodies of saints and the relics which were deposited there.

A companion who was walking with him said: "Oh what a rich city this is!" The saint replied that he esteemed the homilies of St. John Chrysostom on the gospel of St. Matthew as of more value than all the city of Paris.

Thomas had a great memory, and it frequently happened that he dictated to three or four secretaries at once, though they were writing on different subjects. This saint was called the angelical doctor for three reasons, — for the acute-

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ness of his arguments, for the purity of his life, and because he wrote angelically on the subject of the angels. He was tall of stature and straight, his face was healthy but without much colour, he had a large head, and was rather stout and of robust strength.

A general council was held at Lyons in France, by order of Pope Gregory the Tenth, in the year of the Lord twelve hundred and seventy-two, and as by order of the pope this holy doctor was to assist at it, he set out on the journey. And having lodged in a castle of one of his cousins, he fell ill, but notwithstanding pursued his journey. And having reached a convent of monks of the order of Cistercians in a place called Fossa, he became worse, so that he was nigh to death, and said to his companion, Fra Reginaldo: "This is the place of my eternal repose." The monks served him with much charity during his illness, and at their request he explained to them the book of the Canticles, and this was the last of his labours. The time of his happy departure being at hand, he asked for the holy sacrament; and it being brought, he rose from his bed, and kneeling on the ground, received it with much reverence and fervent devotion. He then desired extreme unction, and he himself assisted and responded to the priest. At midnight on the seventh of March, Rodolph being emperor, St. Thomas, being fifty years of age, raised his hands to heaven, and recommending his soul to God, he passed from this life. The same day the funeral services were solemnly celebrated, there being a great concourse of monks of his order and of that of San Francesco, from all the neighbourhood. The lady, his cousin, in whose castle he fell ill, also came, whose name was Francesca, with many other and great people. Before all was Fra Reginaldo, the companion of the saint, who with a solemn oath said that he had for a long time been intimate with St. Thomas, and that a short time before his death he had heard his general confession, and that he had died as innocent as a child of five years, and that in his opinion he had never in all his life committed a grave or mortal sin.

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At the same time Fra Paolo Aquilino at Naples had this vision. He seemed to see St. Thomas, who read from the pulpit to many disciples, and St. Paul came to listen to him; and he, leaving the pulpit, advanced to meet Paul, but the apostle said to him that he should go on with his lesson, which the saint did; and St. Paul staid to listen to it. When he had finished the lesson he asked the apostle if he had explained his epistle well, and the apostle answered: "Yes, as well as is possible to one still mortal." Paul then added: "I have come now to conduct you to a place where you will have more light and clearness of mental vision than you have had here;" and taking his hand, he led him away with him; which Fra Paolo Aquilino seeing began to lament, and at his voice many of the friars woke up and enquired the cause of his lamentations, and he said to them: "Hasten, my brothers, to St. Thomas, for they are taking him away;" and they noted the day that this happened, and it proved to be the same day that St. Thomas passed from this life. The body of the saint was deposited in the monastery where he died, but was afterwards transferred to Toulouse. He was canonized by Pope John the Twenty-second, in the year of the Lord thirteen hundred and twenty-three. They sought miracles to write in the bull, according to custom, and the pope said: "Though they should not find any other miracles of this saint, those which he wrote are enough, which are the questions of theology which he treated and explained." However, they found many, all proved, which may be read in the bull, and which make this saint more glorious.

Many years after, Pope Pius the Fifth, who was a monk of the same order and a most holy man, made a "Motu proprio," in which he said that having regard to the great benefit which resulted to all the Catholic church from the doctrines of this glorious doctor — since he had wonderfully defended it from the heretics who make continual war upon it — though he had been placed in the catalogue of saints and his feast was celebrated on the seventh of March, he desired nevertheless that in time to come his feast should be celebrated by all the Catholic church, in the same manner

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as Pope Boniface the Eighth commanded the feasts of the four doctors, Gregory, Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome, should be observed; so that he is regarded as the fifth doctor of the church.

In this "Motu proprio" it is mentioned that St. Thomas being in Naples, in the monastery of St. Domenico, the crucifix spoke to him and approved of his doctrine, which makes this miracle much more certain. This holy doctor is indeed well deserving of all the honours that are paid him, for he laboured diligently in the vineyard of the Lord.

The life and martyrdom of forty martyrs. Written by Saint Basil and Simeon Metaphrastes.

GOD complains by the prophet Micah, saying that He is like one who goes to gather grapes after the vintage; signifying by that that those are few who serve Him and save themselves. Every year God gathers His vintage, and so also does the devil. The vintage of God is usually small, but that of the devil is most abundant. Souls go to hell by the thousand, the way is always full; but to heaven now one goes, now another; and although the way is narrow, there is no press nor crowd, for few know that path. And yet, though this is so, at times one sees some company there. At times the Lord finds some beautiful vine laden with grapes for His vintage, as happened on this occasion, when He brought together forty martyrs; having shed their blood, and their bodies having suffered excessive torments, their souls rose to heaven. St. Basil left a brief account of their martyrdom, but it was written more at length by Simeon Metaphrastes. So that from what these two authors wrote, it may be gathered that their life and martyrdom was in this fashion.

In the time of the Emperor Licinius there arose very great persecution against the Christians, so that they were sought for in every place, and if they would not deny the Christian

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faith they were cruelly put to death. In this persecution the demon took for his minister a most cruel man, whose name was Agricolaus. This man received notice that in the army of the emperor there was a company of forty soldiers from the province of Cappadocia — men of much valour, as they had shown themselves in all the undertakings in which they had been engaged; and all, being Christians, confessed that Jesus Christ was the true God.

The army was then in Sebaste, a city of Armenia, whence the prefect had them all conducted before him; and they being led into his presence, he began to speak to them pleasantly, and said: "I have heard of the great friendship which there is among you, and which has been the cause of your doing great deeds in the service of the emperor. I desire that your friendship may continue, and that you may all obey his commandments. He commands that you shall either sacrifice to the gods or be put to death. To me it seems wrong that men so worthy of living should be put to death in the flower of their age. Accept then my counsel, because thus you will not only save your lives, but you will receive great rewards and riches from the emperor; consider well therefore what you will do." To this the valiant cavaliers of Christ replied: "If we have gained victory fighting for the earthly emperor, and have done notable deeds as thou sayest, how much more ought we to do worthy deeds fighting for the Emperor of Heaven; in this fashion we desire to fight, and we are ready to support all the torments which thou canst inflict on us. And since thou dost offer us riches and rewards, know that nothing is of any value in comparison with that which we should lose if we did what thou requirest of us." The prefect answered: "Now consider the case well and what you will do, for to-morrow we shall meet again;" and having thus said, he ordered them to be led to prison, where these saints remained, singing the psalms of David and praying God to help them in the conflict in which they hoped soon to find themselves.

The next day they were brought again before the prefect, who exhorted them to sacrifice to the idols. But they

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mocked him with scornful words, seeking to incite him to commence their martyrdom. The prefect himself indeed desired this, but did not allow himself to sentence them until the arrival of the captain under whose banner they had served, that they might both together pronounce sentence on them; for this reason he had them returned to prison without tormenting them, where they remained seven days until the captain came. Then the prefect and the captain together, being ready to judge the martyrs, ordered them to be brought before them to receive sentence. When they heard this, a little fear entered the hearts of some, which Cirion, who was one of them, perceiving, he said to them with a face full of joy and courage: "My brothers, remember the day when we found ourselves in battle, abandoned by all the rest of the emperor's army, and when we were surrounded by innumerable enemies, and nevertheless, praying to God, we were delivered with the death or flight of our antagonists. Now we have only three enemies, the prefect, the captain, and the devil; and we being forty, shall we fear to be conquered? God forbid; if we have had victory over many, we shall also have it over few; let us ask help of God and pray, for prayer is a fit weapon for such a battle." At these words they all took heart, and kneeling down they said a psalm of David, which they were accustomed to say before going into any great battle, which commences: "Deus in nomine tuo salvem me fac, et in virtute tua libera me."

So being all comforted, they left the prison and presented themselves before the judges.

The captain, taking the first word, said: "How now! is this the return you make our emperor for the favours and rewards which he has bestowed on you more freely than on any other soldiers of his army? Ought you then to despise his commands so obstinately? I counsel you to change your course, for if not, you will be as much punished by me as you have been rewarded by him. Either adore the gods or lay aside your military dress and prepare to suffer great torments."

To which Candidus, one of the forty soldiers, answered:

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"Deprive us freely of our military dress and of our lives together, for we shall hold them as much less loss than to lose Jesus Christ." Then the captain commanded that they should be beaten on their mouths with stones, and he abused the attendants because they were not quick to do it. Here came to pass a wonderful thing, which was this — that when the executioners had been thus occupied a long time, at the end these holy martyrs were all seen without any injury; which was a cause of joy to the servants of Christ, but of confusion to the judges, but in particular to the captain, who, impatient, thinking this was done by incantations and the arts of demons, took a stone and threw it at one of the martyrs; but the stone, guided by another hand than his, did not reach him at whom it was thrown, but struck the prefect on the mouth and wounded him so severely that he and the captain were astonished and confused and became as cruel as lions against the holy martyrs. And that they might have time to consult together what torment they could give them that would be most intolerable, they had them carried back to prison.

The saints passed the night in praising God, who, to give them to understand that He had heard them, spoke to them in such a manner that they all heard the voice. "Your beginning has been valiant and illustrious, but he who endureth to the end shall be saved." This voice, if on the one hand it greatly consoled them, nevertheless on the other put them in fear for the doubt that some one of them might not be constant in martyrdom, and each feared that he should be the one. On the following day the martyrs were removed from the prison that the sentence might be executed which the two wicked judges had ordered between them, which was this — that the season being cold, and there being a great lake near the walls of Sebaste, they should all be thrown into it. They afterwards ordered that there, by the side of the lake, a bath of warm water should be prepared, so that if any one of them were willing to deny Jesus Christ, he might of himself pass into that bath and recover. St. Basil never wearies of magnifying this torment, saying that only

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those who have been at the point of death from cold can tell what terrible suffering it is. But though the glorious martyrs well knew that the pain to which they were condemned was a terrible one, such was the desire which they had to suffer for the love of Christ that, without waiting for the officers to remove their garments, they put them off themselves; each one hurried himself, each endeavoured to be the first, that he might have a little more merit than his companions. Then they all entered into the water up to the throat, and so cold a wind blew that the water wanted but little of being frozen, and the sun had already set. One cannot imagine nor yet write how cruel a torment this was for the holy martyrs. When the saints entered into the water, guided all by the same Spirit, they raised their voices to God and said: "Lord, we are forty; let there be forty crowned." St. Basil notes this because God heard their prayer and accepted it. The same saint says also, that when the cold began to torment them, they said: "It is a hard thing to suffer the cold, but it will be a sweet thing to enjoy paradise. Now the frost afflicts us, but then heaven will comfort us. We are giving one night for eternity."

Now the tyrants had set guards on the shore, that no one should come out of the water unless, denying his faith, he entered into the bath of warm water. A part of the night had passed, and the guards were all as it were asleep, except their leader, who watching and lifting his eyes to the sky, saw a great splendour, and in it thirty-nine angels descending, each with a crown. He was much astonished at this, and especially seeing that the angels were thirty-nine, and that there were forty in the lake. But this doubt soon passed away, because one of them, impatient of the cold, left the lake to enter into the bath; which gave much pain to all the others, and for this their hearts became frozen, as their bodies were already, and each one feared that the same might happen to him. So they all had recourse to God, praying Him with tears and sighs to help them, and that He would not permit that, to escape from that lake, their souls should go to the lake of hell. The compassionate God

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consoled them in two ways. The one, because they saw the miserable fugitive and apostate who entered into the bath die suddenly a wretched death, the cold being driven in by the warm water, so that it overcame the natural heat. The other was that one of the guards who kept watch, seeing the cause why thirty-nine angels had descended from heaven with the same number of crowns, awaked the other guards and said to them that they must guard him as well as the rest, because he had become a Christian; and having said this, he entered into the lake. St. Basil says that it happened here, as in the case of Judas; because when he failed from the number of the apostles, St. Matthew succeeded him. It happened also as it did to St. Paul, who first persecuted the Christians and then became one of them; so this man, who at first persecuted the martyrs and threatened to kill them if they even made a motion to leave the lake, afterwards entered himself into their company. This event gave great heart to the martyrs, and all night they stood constant in their pain.

The following morning, the judges having so commanded, they were taken out of the water half dead; and to make an end of them the limbs of all were broken, and in this mode they rendered their spirits to God. Among these martyrs was one called Meliton, who was the youngest, but more robust than the others; so that neither the cold of the water nor the breaking of his limbs was sufficient to deprive him entirely of life. This youth had a mother who was present. Now it happened that the judges, in order that the Christians who lived secretly in that country should not come by night and take away the bodies and relics of the martyrs to bury and honour them, commanded that they should place the bodies on cars and carry them to a certain field and there burn them. And all the bodies were laid on the cars except that of the boy who was still living. His mother, seeing that they left him and did not take him to burn with the rest, took him and placed him on her shoulders, saying: " My son, finish thy course with thy companions; do not part from such worthy company, that in the presence of God thou mayest

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not be inferior to them." While they were on the way he yielded his soul to God, but not even for this was the woman disturbed; but she laid him with the others, and he was burnt with them. After the fire was extinguished some bones remained, which were thrown into a river, to remove them entirely from the eyes of the Christians. But little avails human diligence when divine Providence disposes otherwise. Three days afterwards the saints appeared to a priest of that city called Peter and made known to him the place where he would find their relics. The bishop went at night with some others who were his priests; and having arrived at the place pointed out to them, they saw that the bones of the saints shone in the water like the stars in heaven; and they took them with much reverence and carried them to a convenient place.

The church celebrates the feast of these holy martyrs on the tenth of March, and their martyrdom took place about the year of the Lord three hundred and one, Licinius being emperor. Nicephorus wrote of these saints in book fourteenth, chapter ninth.

The life of Saint Vitalis, martyr. Written by Saint Ambrose.

ST. VITALIS was a citizen of Ravenna; he was a cavalier and a person of great authority. In the persecution of the Christians by Nero, the officers who were in the city of Ravenna were about to cut off the head of a Christian doctor named Orsicinius, who until that time had remained steadfast in the faith. But seeing himself led to execution, his neck laid bare, his eyes bandaged, the sword unsheathed, and the executioner ready to perform his office, his heart failed him, and he made a sign that he was ready to sacrifice to the idols. Vitalis, who was a Christian secretly, was present on this occasion; and it appeared to him that this was a good occasion to declare himself, for the salvation of that soul that was at the point of perishing.

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So he came forward and began to counsel Orsicinius, saying: "What are you about to do? You have given health to many by means of your arts of medicine, and now you are giving death to yourself. You have cured others; cure yourself now of this fear and weak heart which you have. You have borne many sufferings to arrive at the place where you now stand; take care not to lose the crown, now so near your grasp, for so little; remember you exchange an hour of torment for an eternity of content." Orsicinius accepted this good counsel and took heart and joyfully suffered martyrdom for the love of Jesus Christ. Vitalis rejoiced much, seeing such fruit of his words, and desiring to accompany them with suitable works, took the body of Orsicinius and had it honourably buried.

It soon came to the ears of the judge that Vitalis had been the cause that Orsicinius had not sacrificed, and that he had afterwards buried his body; and suspecting him to be a Christian, he ordered him to be arrested, and began to persuade him to leave adoring Christ and to sacrifice to idols.

Vitalis smiled and made a jest of his words, saying to the judge, whose name was Paulinus: "You would do better to leave these your gods, which serve only for nests for scorpions, and for places where spiders spin their webs, where bats hide themselves in the daytime, and mice continually play within. You would do well to adore Jesus Christ the Creator of Heaven and Earth."

Paulinus immediately commanded that Vitalis should be stretched on the rack, which order the officers executed with so much cruelty that all his joints were dislocated; but nothing that could be done would induce him to change his mind. The judge then caused a very deep ditch to be dug and St. Vitalis to be thrown in and many stones heaped over him; and in this manner the holy martyr passed from this life to that of the blessed. There was a priest of the idols who had thus counselled Paulinus, and as soon as the saint was dead, an evil spirit entered into him and tormented him, so that he constantly cried out: "Vitalis, you burn me! Vitalis, you burn me!" He remained seven days in this torment; and

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at last, not being able to endure the fire which he felt, he threw himself into the river and was drowned. So that he had a just reward for his evil counsel; and on the contrary to Vitalis, for having well counselled Orsicinius, God gave grace to become His martyr; so that losing temporal life for His love he might gain eternal life in heaven. The church celebrates the feast of St. Vitalis on the day of his martyrdom, which was on the twenty-eighth of April, in the year of the Lord about sixty. Petrus Damianius, Bede, Usuardus, and other authors wrote of St. Vitalis.

The life of Saint Monica, widow, the mother of Saint Augustine. Written in the book of his confessions, and by Cardinal Lippomanus.

MONICA was a most noble matron, of the city of Carthage in Africa, who led a melancholy and afflicted life, not so much for being left a widow — which is not a light sorrow — as on account of her son Augustine; who, though she was herself a Christian, was not baptized, but followed the errors of the Manichæans. This was an arrow which continually pierced the heart of this saintly lady, when she thought that her son, who might be a citizen of heaven, should choose to be an inhabitant of hell. This lady shed more tears for her living son than other mothers for their dead ones. Once she saw in a dream or vision an angel, who spoke to her and asked her the cause of her melancholy. She replied: "The cause is a son I have, who is far from the kingdom of heaven." The angel said to her: "Rest assured that at his death he shall go where you shall then be." The pious mother related this to the son, and he said: "You did not rightly understand, my mother, for the angel must have said that you should come where I should be. And this will be, because the sect which I follow, of the Manichæans, is the true one, which guides those who embrace it to heaven; and some day you will renounce your errors and profess the opinions of the Mani-

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chæans, and you will go with me to heaven, from which now you are far distant."

This much displeased St. Monica, but she still continued to weep and pray, asking God for the recovery of her son. She once spoke to a bishop, a holy man and very learned, and with tears entreated him that he would speak with her son Augustine, and endeavour, by reason and authority, to lead him from the errors into which he had fallen. The bishop, who knew Augustine, and that he was so great a logician that he discomfited and ashamed all those who undertook to argue with him, said to her: "My lady, I do not care to dispute with him, but leave him to himself, for he studies so much that by his very studies, with the help of God, he will see his errors."

This did not satisfy the afflicted mother, but she importuned the bishop with her prayers that in any case he would speak to her son, because it might be so useful to him; but the bishop still declined to do so. The good lady wept bitterly, thinking to move him by her tears; which the holy prelate, seeing, said to her: "Console yourself, lady, and hold it for certain that a son of so many tears cannot be lost." There now came to Augustine the desire to go to Rome to read rhetoric, as he had already done in Carthage.

His mother knew it and determined to go with him, and followed him even to the boat in which he was to embark. Augustine did not desire to have his mother in his company, and therefore he waited until she was offering prayers in a church of St. Cyprian, near the seashore, when he embarked and left her there. When his mother discovered this, she went to the seashore, and with sighs and tears called him cruel and hard-hearted, and she prayed God that the wind might change so they could not sail, but should be obliged to return to the shore. She remained here until at last, being weary, she let him go and returned home. But so great was her maternal piety that she could find no rest, so that after some days she embarked and went in search of him.

Augustine had a severe illness in Rome, from which it

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may be believed — as he himself confesses — that God delivered him through his mother's prayers. He had rhetoric in Rome for a year, and gained much credit. The city of Milan sent to Rome for a master to teach this science, and it was ordered that Augustine should go. So he went to Milan, and here he found his mother, and they rejoiced together; but she never forgot to pray God continually for his conversion, as she had always done. St. Ambrose was at this time Archbishop of Milan, to whom Augustine bore much affection, listening willingly to his preaching, and holding long arguments with him.

The society of Augustine pleased St. Ambrose much, as he was so learned in all the sciences, and now Augustine, by the help of God, approached the time of his conversion. St. Ambrose willingly occupied himself with this, moved by the constant and pitiful tears and prayers of his mother. During the friendship of Augustine with Ambrose, and with another holy man named Simplicianus, it pleased God to convert him, and he embraced the faith of the holy Roman church. St. Ambrose himself baptized him, and he afterwards defended the faith which he had newly embraced, earnestly as he had until now persecuted it. It would be difficult to describe the joy and thankfulness of St. Monica when she saw her son brought to the condition which she so much desired for him. She thanked God continually for this mercy, and she considered all the time of her prayers and tears as well spent in His service.

It is remembered that when she was a very little child she would go from her father's house into the church, where she would be found in a corner, saying the Ave Maria; and when she was missing from the house they were sure of finding her in the church. It is also remembered how many times she rose in the night to say the prayers that Feconda her mother taught her. Neither must it be forgotten that she was so fond of giving charity that she concealed the half of what was given her to eat that she might give it to the poor. She visited the hospitals and carried to the sick such things as were fitting for them; even as her years

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increased. When her mother requested her to dress and adorn herself, she did it against her will, and said as the humble Esther did: "Thou knowest, O Lord, that I desire not these ornaments." She was wise and considerate of speech, patient in answering, and quiet in everything. She had desired to remain a virgin, but God, having ordained that good fruit should spring from so good a tree for the benefit of His church, and in order that many should be converted by means of Augustine, inspired her father to give her as wife to a man of noble birth, called Patritius; who though of a high family was nevertheless a Gentile, an idolater, and of an evil disposition. He ill-treated his wife Monica, who was good and holy; but she never answered him an unkind word, but let the fury of her husband pass, and offered to God the sufferings which she endured. When her husband had become tranquil, she gave him her reasons for those things which he had reproved in her, and this she did with humble and loving words. Oh, how many threats and injuries she suffered from that impatient man, notwithstanding that she served him with all diligence and obeyed him with all humility. She gave many alms, made prayers with many tears, and caused many masses to be said, that God might enlighten the soul of her husband and lead him from the errors into which he had fallen. St. Monica sometimes found herself in company with other ladies, her friends, who related the ill-treatment they received from their husbands, and spoke ill of them; but she spoke no word against hers, nor made any complaint of him. And as the other ladies knew him to be an eccentric and violent man, they wondered at the great patience of Monica, who continued offering everything to God, praying Him that He would reward her by the conversion of her husband. She herself took the care of her children, and did not bring them up delicately, but took great pains to teach them to live as Christians, to fear God, and observe all His holy commandments; and would have preferred to see them die rather than offend God. She had a daughter called Perpetua, who had a husband, but her mother had so well brought her up

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that, being left a widow, she entered into a monastery, which Augustine founded when he was a bishop, and closed her life in sanctity.

Patritius her husband had also two sons, one named Basilica and the other Felicita; and she brought them up and taught them as if they had been her own children. These were also monks in the same monastery, and bore the reputation of saints. All this proceeded principally from God, and from the good counsels which St. Monica gave them. It comforted her much to see that these children were so good, but when she thought that her husband and her son Augustine were so far from the narrow way, she could not restrain her tears. But persevering in her holy exercises, God at last granted her prayers, and Patritius her husband was converted to the true faith and repented of his sins; and after his conversion he treated his wife well all the rest of his life, for he became humble and peaceful, and at last he died, a Catholic and a good Christian, at the age of seventy-three years. St. Monica remained a widow, and all her thoughts now were for the conversion of St. Augustine, and this also she obtained of the Lord. After the conversion of her son, when she called to mind her past life, the sighs, tears, alms, prayers, fastings, and other things which she had done, they all appeared to her well spent, having procured so happy a result as the conversion of her husband and her son.

The employment of St. Monica after her son's conversion was to confess, and take the communion often, to offer constant prayers, and to have her thoughts always turned to God, spending the greater part of the day in church.

St. Augustine, speaking with God, was able to say with certainty that from the day of her baptism a single word against the divine commandments had never passed her lips. St. Augustine desired to leave Milan and return to Africa, and his mother being in his company and having arrived at the city of Ostia, they were conversing together at a window of the house where they lodged, which had a beautiful view. Their conversation was of the glory of the blessed,

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to the great comfort of both; at the end of their conversation the holy lady said: "I have no more care for the things of this life, since God has granted me the favour I have so often begged of Him, to see you a Christian and living above the world, which has been my heart's desire; now nothing remains for me to do in this world; when it shall please God, may He call me to Himself." Five days after this conversation she had a slight attack of fever, which increased so much that it became fatal.

A brother of St. Augustine who was in their company said to him that if his mother died they would carry her to Africa, to lay her in her own sepulchre; but she, hearing their conversation, said: "Bury me here in Ostia; for let my body be where it will, God will raise it up at the last day. One thing I beg, that you will remember me when you celebrate the mass." She then confessed, but on account of the nature of her illness did not take the communion. The time of her departure approaching, she began to say these words of David: "When I called upon the Lord, He granted my prayer, and in tribulation He has enlarged my heart; I shall rest in Him"; and saying this she yielded her soul to God. It was the ninth day of her illness and the fifty-sixth year of her age, St. Augustine being then thirty-three years old; and he in company with his brother laid the body of his mother, with many tears, in the church of St. Andrew.

Pope Martin the Fifth had her body carried to Rome, to the church of St. Augustine. The church celebrates the feast of this saint on the day of her death, which was on the fourth of May, in the year of our Lord three hundred and seventy-eight, according to Canisius; Theodosius being emperor, in company with Gratianus.

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The feast of Saint Michael the Archangel, with some considerations relating to him and to the other angels.

TWO things may be held as true: one that there are angels, the other that St. Michael is the chief among them; but these two things we must consider more particularly. That there are angels may be read, not only in the book of the Apocalypse, where the battle between St. Michael and Lucifer is mentioned, but in many other places of the holy scriptures. We also read that there was war among them, but it is not to be understood by this war that it was made like other wars, because in heaven there are neither swords, lances, arquebuses, nor artillery; this war was only opposition of will, and difference of opinion on one side and the other.

In Genesis it may be read how three angels appeared to the patriarch Abraham, who were about to destroy Sodom; the patriarch Jacob also saw angels who ascended and descended a ladder which reached from earth to heaven, and he afterwards wrestled all night with one of them. It is written in Exodus that God said to Moses: "If this people will obey my commandments, an angel shall guide them through the desert and bring them to the promised land." It is said in the book of Numbers that an angel opposed himself to the prophet Balaam, as he went to curse the people of Israel. In the book of Kings, mention is made of angels in several places. In the New Testament angels are often named, as when Christ was praying in the garden, and when in mortal agony He thought of the cruel pains He was to suffer. St. Luke says that an angel came to Christ from heaven to comfort Him, which was done by bringing to His mind the great benefit which would result from His Passion. And to express it in one word, angels are named in almost all the books of the holy scriptures, and so much is said of them as to prove sufficiently to the Christian that angels exist. Some philosophers have come to the knowledge of this truth by natural reason; as if one should enter into a strange house,

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and hearing footsteps overhead, might say with reason that some one was there. We see that the sun, the moon, and the planets, with all the heavens, move; so there must of necessity be some one who moves them. So Aristotle, by the motions of the celestial bodies, discovered that there were separate substances and intelligences, which we Christians call angels. Having thus proved there are angels, let us now see what angels are.

An angel is a spiritual creature, not composed of substance and form, but of acts, powers, and existence, and understanding things without the use of language. The sin of the angels is not mentioned in Genesis, as is the sin of man; neither are they themselves plainly and clearly mentioned, because Moses spoke with a stiff-necked people who were inclined to idolatry, and who, if they had known there were angels, would have been tempted to worship them. Their sin is not mentioned because God acts like some powerful lord, who has two vassals, both guilty of the same crime. One of these is a nobleman of great family, the other is a peasant. The poor man is hanged publicly for his punishment, and for a warning to others; but for fear of commotion among the people, or that his family should do some violence to the ministers of justice, the trial of the nobleman is conducted in secret, and being condemned to death he is executed at night, within the walls of the prison. When he is enquired for, the answer is: "He is dead." How he died and for what cause is not told, but only that "he is dead." So God punished the angels secretly, as noble creatures, and nothing was said plainly of either the sin or the punishment. But man, who was but a rough peasant, made of clay, was publicly punished. The crime and punishment of the angels were secret, because the illness was beyond cure, and on such the doctors spend no care. But mention is made of man's sin because his illness was not incurable; because he, being tempted or persuaded to sin by another, it was just that by another should be provided a remedy. Angels are divided into three hierarchies. In the first are three orders: the highest are called seraphim, which means spirits

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inflamed with the love of God; the next to these are called cherubim, which means spirits filled with the wisdom of God; and the third order are called thrones, because on them God rests as upon a throne. In the second hierarchy are three orders, called dominions, virtues, and powers. In the third hierarchy are also three orders, principalities, archangels, and angels, which last name is common to all, and this last order has no other particular name. Some doctors say that God does not send into this world angels of the first and second hierarchies, but only of the third.

And though this may usually be the case, nevertheless when an occasion occurs of high importance, as was that of the incarnation, God sends angels of the first hierarchy; it being fitting, as St. Gregory observes, that one of the highest angels should be sent to Mary, because most high was the errand upon which he came.

Some have said that God has appointed a guardian angel to each species of irrational creatures, so that one angel has care of the species of lions that they shall not fail, another of the species of horses, and so of all the other animals; but to each man, who is an individual of the human species, is given a guardian angel; and if he is a king or great prince he has two, his own and the one who presides over the province of which he is the head. St. Jerome says that great is the dignity of the soul which has an angel for its guard from the time of its birth. St. Bernard says, that being always in the company of our guardian angel, wherever we go we should have care to do nothing in his presence which we should be ashamed to do in the presence of men. However miserable and wretched a man may be, his guardian angel never abandons him until his death; and even Antichrist had his guardian angel who withheld him from committing many sins, or he would have committed many more than he did. The angel who is the guardian of one man is after his death the guardian of another; and also when a man dies who has been tempted by a demon, Lucifer commands him to go to tempt some other.

The names of three angels are known to us — Michael,

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Gabriel, and Raphael. The name Raphael signifies medicine of God, and it was he who cured the elder Tobit and guided the younger, and who by help of his counsel drove away the demon Asmodeus; he consoles the afflicted and is a good advocate for all these things. Gabriel signifies the strength of God. This holy angel revealed to Daniel the mystery of the incarnation, and was sent as the ambassador of God to the glorious Virgin Mary, and held with her that discourse which is recorded by St. Luke. He was of the first hierarchy, according to the opinion of St. Gregory and St. Bernard. He announced the nativity of John the Baptist, punished Zachariah for his want of faith, carried food to Christ when He hungered in the desert, and afterwards comforted Him when He prayed in the garden. Christ had no guardian angel, for He had no need of one, as it would not be fitting that a child should be given as a guardian and master to a great doctor.

Michael signifies "who is as God," because when he took the part of God against Lucifer he said these words, which were revealed to David by the Holy Spirit: "Who is like the Lord our God who dwelleth on high?"

Michael was formerly president of the synagogue, and is now of the Catholic church, which celebrates his feast on the eighth day of the month of May.

The life of Saint Isidore, husbandman.

IN the city of Madrid, in the diocese of Toledo, now famous as the court of the Most Catholic King, was born Isidore, of an humble lineage in this world, though God had destined him to greatness in heaven. He was named by his parents Isidore, in honour of St. Isidore of Seville, who is held in high veneration in all Spain. And though born in so low a station, he was educated by Christian parents, and so trained by them to the practice of every virtue that the most great and noble might well follow an example so illustrious. Having arrived at man's estate, he became a husbandman, and placed himself in the service of one of the principal men of

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Madrid, Giovanni di Vargas, for a salary which poorly sufficed for his wants; and he took for a wife a good handmaid of God, Maria della Cabeza by name, by whom he had one son, who lived but a short time.

This worthy servant of the Lord, while labouring diligently in his master's service, never neglected his devout spiritual exercises; being well assured that his labour would not be less successful in consequence. This holy saint continued in purity of life, proceeding from one virtue to another, even sharing with the needy the scanty subsistence which he gained by his labour; and one day, having given all the food in the jar in charity, another poor man came, and he sent his wife to see if by chance some little might remain; and she found it full. He frequently visited the churches of Madrid, and in particular that of our Holy Lady of Atocchia, where he heard mass with so much devotion that he could not easily go away; and spending his time in visiting other churches, he went late to his master's work, so that the other labourers, moved with envy, accused him to his master, charging him with neglecting his duty in the fields, under the pretext of sanctity; and being severely reproved, he answered nothing, saying only that his work had not been neglected, though he had not thought it well to defer the service of God. But his master, watching his proceedings, saw that he went very late to the field, and went in search of him in great anger; but when he came near the field, he saw two angels, who with two pair of white oxen, assisted him to plough the land, who disappeared at his approach; and when with much gentleness he enquired who those were who aided him in his labours, Isidore replied that he had never sought help save from God alone; so his master was satisfied and no longer listened to his accusers.

Being one day in fervent prayer, some one came to tell him that a wolf was devouring his mule, but he did not disturb his prayer, which having finished, he went out and found the mule safe and the wolf lying dead at his feet. Being a brother of a fraternity, he came late one day, when they were to dine in company, and followed by many poor, and found they had

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all dined; and being reproved by them, both for his delay and his company, he answered that it mattered little as his portion would have supplied them all; and going to find the jar where his portion had been placed, it was full; and wondering at the greatness of this miracle, he divided it among all the poor who had come with him. But through his great pity he not only succoured rational creatures, but he did not fail to provide for those without reason; for one day as he was on his way to the mill, he saw many doves and other birds on a tree, who by reason of the great snow did not know where to seek food; and he swept away the snow from the ground and scattered grain enough to satisfy the hunger of all these little creatures; and going to the mill, he had of the grain which remained so much flour that his sack was filled.

He was indeed ripe in all virtue; he was prudent in his calling, just in his dealings with his neighbour, affable in discourse, patient in tribulation, temperate in living, contented in adversity, fervent in prayer, and resigned to the will of God, who had enriched him with so much grace.

Finally, after so many labours and fatigues, it pleased God to take him to heaven; and being reduced to the point of death by a grave illness, he armed himself with all the sacraments of the church and rendered his soul to his Creator in the year eleven hundred and seventy. He was buried in the cemetery of St. Andrew of Madrid, and is held in great veneration, not only in Madrid but through all Spain.

Who desires to know more of this glorious confessor must read his canonization, as much is here omitted for the sake of brevity. His festival is celebrated on the fifteenth day of May.

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The life of Saint Basil the great bishop, confessor, and doctor. Written by Anfiloquinus, Bishop of Icomin, and other authors.

AMONG the provinces of Asia is one called Pontus, which is bathed by the great sea, on whose shores are the two famous cities, Calcedonia and Nicomedia.

Besides these there is another of not less renown called Helenopontus, and in this St. Basil was born. His father had the same name as himself, and his mother was called Emmelia; both good and virtuous persons, as one sees from their children, who were four in number: three sons, who were all three bishops, namely Basil the Great, of whom we are now speaking; Gregory, Bishop of Mysia, and Petrus, Bishop of Sebaste. They had also a daughter, who was the oldest, who was very beautiful; and as the husband to whom she had been promised died before their nuptials were celebrated, she entered into a monastery and remained there all her days.

Basil was much disposed to the study of letters from the time of his early childhood, and he studied many sciences in different places, and at last he established himself in Athens, the head and fountain of all science. Here he remained fifteen years, in which time he became a great philosopher and lectured on this science publicly. He and Gregory Nazianzen, who also studied in Athens, were great friends, and he was also the friend of Libanus.

And though Basil was much occupied with his studies, he did not for that reason forget the exercise of virtue, showing himself pure, temperate, and humble. He spent much time in prayer, fasted often, and did all the good in his power to his neighbour, and gave no one offence or annoyance. He had an inspiration from God to seek to abandon the study of humanities and devote himself to that of sacred letters. This was the reason, having heard that there was in a monastery of Egypt an abbot called Porphyrius, who was a great theologian, that he went to find him, and spent a whole year in his

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society, and gained much profit from his instructions on the books of the holy scriptures.

In all this time Basil ate only herbs and drank water. There arising in his mind the desire to go to Jerusalem to visit the holy places, where the mysteries of our redemption were wrought, he asked the permission and blessing of the Abbot Porphyrius, and set out. Basil had for his master in Athens a great philosopher called Eubolus, and as he was passing through that city he went to visit him, and found with him many other philosophers, with whom he was disputing. Basil was much changed, both in dress and in countenance from what he was before; and he placed himself before Eubolus and began to reprove him, saying to him that he ought not to spend his life in disputes of small importance, and that the time was enough which he had employed in those studies; and that he would have done more wisely to have endeavoured to understand divine philosophy, to despise the world, to read the holy scriptures, and to seek to understand them for his own good and that of his neighbour. The philosophers who were in company with Eubolus asked him who this was who so freely reproved him, and he answered: "It is either God or Basil." Basil then made himself known to him, and Eubolus took him to his house, and in the three days that Basil staid with him he persuaded him to sell all his goods and give the price to the poor and go with him to Jerusalem. Eubolus did as Basil counselled him, who was well content that he had converted his master to God.

Both set out from Athens with the intention of being baptized in the river Jordan. Having arrived in Antioch, and lodging in a house, they saw a young man the son of the landlord, who was very sorrowful and melancholy. Basil asked him the cause, and he said that he was a student, and that his master had given him certain verses of Homer to explain, and that he could not understand them, and therefore he was unhappy. Basil, pitying the youth, explained to him the verses and gave him the explanation in writing, which was such that being shown to the master of the youth, who was a great sophist called Libanius, it caused him

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great amazement; and he said that that explanation was never made by mortal man. He heard afterwards who had made it, and he went to find Basil, and recognized him as his fellow disciple and Eubolus as his master. He brought them to his house and paid them every attention and prayed Basil that he would preach to his disciples; which Basil did, and gave them some instructions fitting for students; that they should preserve the sincerity of their souls, integrity, and purity; that they should walk composedly and with gravity; that their words should be fitting and well considered, not without object nor vehement; that they should be temperate in eating, observe silence in presence of the aged, and be attentive to the words of the wise, that they might always learn something; that they should always show humility in the presence of their superiors, and that with their inferiors and equals they should be pleasant and friendly; they should speak little and listen much; they should guard against being talebearers, rash of speech, answering without consideration, or laughing beyond moderation; they should walk with their eyes cast down, but their souls raised on high. They were to avoid being contrary, obstinate or perfidious; not to seek places or offices without deserving them, and to fly worldly honours. And for those things which might be for the benefit of their neighbour, they should seek a reward, not from him but from heaven. Such were the counsels which Basil gave to the disciples of Libanius, and he sought to persuade him to leave the world and go with them. All the time they staid with him they contented themselves with only bread and water, though he desired to entertain them most delicately.

At last they took leave of him, and continuing their journey arrived in Jerusalem. They visited the holy places with great devotion, and afterwards waited on Massimus, bishop of that city, who, knowing that under the rough and humble dress of two holy pilgrims were concealed two celebrated men, felt much affection for them, and was willing to go with them to baptize them in the river Jordan.

When Basil came near the river, he undressed himself

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and entered the water, and the bishop baptized him, and also Eubolus, and anointed both with the holy oil and clothed them with the dress of the Christians. They then all took the communion, with much content and spiritual gladness on the part of the two Christians, new in respect to their baptism, but old in respect of their good desires and holy works. All then returned to Jerusalem, and Basil and Eubolus leaving the good Bishop Massimus, to his great regret, departed and went to Antioch, where Maletius, the bishop of that city, ordained Basil deacon; and he began to shed abroad the light of that celestial doctrine which he had acquired, preaching to the people, to the wonder of all and the profit of many; so that in consequence of his preaching many who were Gentiles became Christians, and others who were unworthy Christians amended their lives. One restored his ill-gotten goods; another reformed his evil life; this one laid aside his bad habit of swearing at every word; and that one forsook the cursed practice of gambling. Such a young man embraced a religious life; such a lady, despising the things of the world, became a nun. Some fasted much, others prayed long or gave great alms, and all deplored their sins and did penitence. The fame of Basil spread through all the East, and many sent for him, to enjoy a share of his holy teaching. He went to many places, and particularly to the city of Cæsarea, where he had the same effect as in the other places where he had already been.

He was so much esteemed and praised by every one that Eusebius, the bishop of that city, bore him some little envy — as is told by Gregory Nazianzen — and for that reason was less cordial with him than he had been; indeed he said some things which displeased Basil so much that he determined to leave that place; which he did, and went with his friends into the province of Pontus, and retired to a monastery for some days. But about this time the Arians became strong and gained ground in the city of Cæsarea, and it was needful to find some person who could dispute with them for the defence of the Catholics. All the citizens and the bishop

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turned their thoughts to Basil, as it appeared no other person could be found so suitable for this purpose, and they sent to summon him.

Basil desired the counsel of Gregory Nazianzen, who was his firm friend, and also of Eubolus upon this subject; and Gregory advised him to give no thought to anything that had passed between himself and the bishop, for this being the cause of God, it appeared to him it was his duty to go to Cæsarea without delay, and that he himself would accompany him. These two lights of the church went to that city, taking Eubolus with them; and as soon as they arrived the shades of heresy disappeared and the state of things was changed; the Catholics who had been disheartened gained courage, and the heretics became more and more discouraged.

A few days later Eusebius, the bishop of Cæsarea, died, and through the course which Gregory pursued towards the other bishops who were assembled to make a new election, Basil was elected without any opposition; and after he was bishop he was more indefatigable than before in his efforts to expel all the heretics from that city; and those who remained concealed themselves, not daring to declare themselves before Basil. In the time of this holy bishop there was a great famine, and many were in danger of death from hunger. But such was his diligence in asking from some to give to others, and in causing grain to be brought from other places, that it was less fatal than had been feared. And for this reason he gained much affection from the people, and his fame was greatly increased.

This was the time when Valens the brother of Valentinian was emperor of the East, who was a great Arian heretic; and being influenced by the heretics, he began to persecute the Bishop Basil, and for this reason he went to Cæsarea. But seeing him so much beloved by the people, he did not dare to proceed against him openly, fearing to cause some rebellion.

He however sent to speak with him one of his captains, named Modestus, whose life was most contrary to his name, for he was a most cruel man, and was the author of all the

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cruelties which Valens committed; one of which was that having assembled eighty bishops and priests who opposed the sect of the Arians, and having placed them in an old vessel, he had it conducted into the high seas and set on fire.

This cruel man sought out Basil, and, as is recorded by Theodorus, first spoke to him mildly, promising him great favour with the emperor if he would embrace the doctrines of Arius and favour his disciples. And as mildness had no effect, he threatened him cruelly. But the courageous bishop did not lose heart, and told him he could not please an earthly emperor by offending the Emperor of Heaven, that he was indifferent to his threats, and that though he should put him to death he would do him a great benefit, by setting him free from a life so full of fatigue as his had been. At last Modestus said to him: "Now, Basil, think over this matter to-night and give me your answer to-morrow." Basil answered: "I do not need this time for consideration, for of the same mind that I am to-night I shall be to-morrow."

Modestus went to the emperor and related what had passed, and Valens, being very angry, determined to send him into exile. The sentence of exile being written, it was brought to the emperor for his signature, and he took the pen to write it, but not a single letter of it was visible, though he wrote it three times over; and as this was not sufficient to change his evil intention, he called for another pen. His arm then began to tremble as if it had been paralyzed, when, filled with anger, he tore the paper on which the sentence was written.

At this same time the empress was suddenly attacked by an illness, so severe and painful, that she was brought near to death. The same thing happened also to the little son whom the emperor had by her, who was the sole heir to all his possessions. All these things, the emperor did not doubt, had befallen him because he persecuted Basil; so he sent to call him, and entreated him to offer prayers to God for him, and for the restoration of the empress and her son. The holy bishop did so without delay, and the result was that

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the child became decidedly better and the empress entirely well.

Notwithstanding this, the emperor was disappointed that all this had come through Basil's prayers, as he would have preferred that the heretic priests and he himself should have obtained this favour. He sent for some of them and gave them the same charge, so that when the child should be quite cured the merit of his cure should be attributed to them, and not to Basil. As soon as the Arians commenced to offer prayers for the child he passed from this life, so that the emperor might clearly understand that the prayers of the Arians had proved his destruction, and those of Basil his salvation; but for all that he would not give up his perverse opinions or cease to persecute Basil.

The emperor speaking once with him, there was present one named Demosthenes, the principal cook of the emperor, and like him a heretic. He, hearing the great Basil say many things against the Arian sect, took upon himself to defend it, and in many words said much that was ignorant. Basil turned himself to his priests and said: "Behold here a Demosthenes without eloquence." Then, turning to this same Demosthenes, he said to him: "You would do better to take care that the food of the emperor should be well cooked and properly served than to undertake to speak on questions of theology and faith." This discussion took place on the day of the Epiphany, in the cathedral church of the city of Cæsarea; where, as much by hearing the arguments of Basil as by seeing the ceremonies of the Catholics, the offerings to the church, the sight of all on their knees praying in profound silence, the clergy doing their office with gravity and devotion, as well as seeing all take the communion at the end of the mass, the emperor's opinion was changed, and he somewhat disposed himself to leave the sect of the Arians, where he saw only disorder and confusion.

On this occasion he made great offerings, and all the people stood watching to see if Basil would accept them, the emperor being a heretic. The holy prelate accepted them, as he had some hope of his conversion, that he might not

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exasperate him. The emperor would have been in effect converted, if he had not been surrounded by many heretics, who laboured to cause disorder in all that Basil instituted.

Another persecution arose against this holy man, and the cause was that a certain Eusebius, who was governor of the city, sought to have in his power one of the principal ladies of that city, who was a widow and very beautiful. This lady fled to the church and prayed St. Basil to defend her, which he willingly undertook to do. The governor hated the saint, and this appearing to him an opportunity to injure him, and also to obtain possession of the lady, he sought false witnesses and ordered him to be brought before him. He who was innocent, that he might not seem guilty, appeared before the tribunal for trial. The governor, without any investigation, ordered the lady to be thrown into prison and said abusive things to the holy prelate, as if he had been already convicted of crime. The case was soon known in the city, and in a short time all the men and women of Cæsarea assembled to defend their pastor. It was strange to see old as well as young women hurrying with stones and sticks, the men with lances and swords, all threatening to kill the governor, and even the emperor, if their pastor was not restored to them free. The governor was obliged to leave the city, and if Basil had not opposed himself to the popular fury, he would not have escaped with his life.

This was the last of Basil's dealings with the Arian emperor, Valens, or his ministers. Not long after, this emperor, being conquered in a battle, fled and hid himself with some of his cavaliers in a straw hut. When the victorious enemy, who pursued him, found where he was, they set fire to the hut, and they all perished. This happened, according to Trithemius, after the death of St. Basil.

All the authors who write of this saint praise especially his purity and abstinence. He fasted often, and frequently remained upon his knees in prayer until the sun set and rose again; his dress was one robe, or a simple tunic; he was the first who brought the hardness and customs of the

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old hermit fathers to rules more convenient and reasonable. He wrote many books and with much wisdom; and Gregory Nazianzen says that no Greek philosopher until his time had explained the holy scriptures with more truth and power.

The life of St. Basil was so austere that he was reduced to skin and bone, and an acute fever by which he was attacked reduced him to extremity. He was visited by a celebrated doctor who was a Jew, and St. Basil was much interested for his conversion. The saint asked the doctor his opinion of his condition, and he answered him: "What I know it pains me to say, for when the sun sets this evening your life will be closed." "It will not be so," replied Basil. "Not so?" said the doctor. "I would lose my life if it does not prove so." "I do not desire," said Basil, "that you should lose your life, but if to-morrow morning at sunrise I shall be alive, will you become a Christian and be baptized?"

The doctor, who regarded his death as certain, accepted these conditions, as it appeared to him impossible that he should live so long. St. Basil made a prayer to God, and it was granted to him not only to live till the following day, but to improve so much that he rose from his bed and went to the church to baptize the doctor, who became a Christian willingly, having seen this, which appeared to him no less than a miracle.

The holy prelate, having done this, returned well content to his bed, and there in presence of the new Christian, who went beyond many already old in the faith in almsgiving and other good works which he did, prepared himself to die. He received the holy communion most devoutly, shedding many tears and recommending to all present charity and the love of God and of one's neighbour. Then raising his eyes to heaven, he rendered his soul to God. The doctor, seeing that the saint was dead, threw himself upon his breast with many tears and said: "O Basil, true servant of God, if thou hadst been pleased to live yet longer, even now thou wouldst not have died!"

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When it was known through the city that Basil was dead, a great crowd of people went to see his holy body, to kiss it and pay it reverence. All wept the loss of a diligent pastor and a loving father; and it was difficult to prevent them from tearing his robe to pieces, each one wishing a fragment for a memorial. His body was buried in the cathedral church of the city of Cæsarea, and the church celebrates his feast on the fourteenth day of June. He died in the year of the Lord three hundred and eighty, according to Trithemius, in the time of Valens and Valentinian, emperors and brothers.

Gregory Nyssenus, Gregory Nazianzen, Heladius, Bishop of Cæsarea, his disciple, Nicephorus, and other authors all wrote of St. Basil.

The life of Saint Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, and confessor. Selected from those which have been written of him by Saint Augustine, Saint Gregory, Pope Gregory, Uranius the priest, and other authors.

ST. PAULINUS was French by birth, of the city of Bordeaux; he was of noble race and very rich in temporal things. He had a wife, his equal in all these things, whose name was Therese. He took much pleasure in the study of human and divine letters, in which he became very learned and experienced, as is proved by all the writings which he left.

There was once brought to his notice the conversation which Christ held with a rich young man, the conclusion of which was, that he should sell all that he had, and give to the poor, and should follow Him. Paulinus kept this in mind, and while on the one hand he thought of the convenience, the authority, and the independence of others, which are the special advantage of riches, yet considering what Christ said — when He saw that the young man would not follow His counsel, but went away sorrowful — that "it was easier

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for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven," he doubted of his own salvation, he being so rich; and he determined to make it sure if possible. This resolution he communicated to his wife, and by mutual consent they sold all their goods and gave the price to the poor; and to escape the murmurs and complaints of their relatives and friends, when they saw them suffering want, they determined to go to some other country; and passing into Italy, they established themselves at Nola, a city of Campana, where their lives bore such testimony in their favour that all respected and esteemed them; and not only the people of that city, but of other places where their fame had spread.

Paulinus, finding himself in this condition, did not on that account forget to give alms; and a poor man once asking charity of him, he desired his wife to give him a loaf of bread, and she replied that they had but one in the house. "Give that," said Paulinus, "God will provide;" but she would not give it. The hour of dinner came, and some sailors arrived who told them they had brought certain ships loaded with corn and wine, which had been sent to them as gifts, and that they had been somewhat detained, as one of the ships had been wrecked. The wife of the saint was present, and he said to her: "See, my wife, how for one loaf which you were unwilling to give to that poor man, you have lost a ship loaded with corn."

It happened afterwards that the bishop of Nola died, and by common consent of all the people, Paulinus was chosen bishop. This bishopric was very rich, and he had a great income, so the words of scripture were fulfilled in him, "that he who should forsake all for the love of Christ, should receive a hundred fold in this world and in the world to come eternal life." He governed his bishopric with discretion and goodness, and did not seek so much to be honoured and reverenced as a bishop as to be loved as a priest. Never was he seen so angry that his anger was not tempered with mercy. He consoled the afflicted, inspired the faint-hearted with courage, softened the violent, edified some by

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his example and others by his good words. Some he aided by wise counsel and others with money, and allowed none to go away disconsolate. He was compassionate, merciful, humble, and peaceful, and followed the footsteps of many saints. He was faithful like Abraham, obedient like Isaac, benignant like Jacob, liberal like Melchisedec, considerate and prudent like Joseph, asking of the rich to give to the poor, and thus being useful to both — to the poor in this life and to the rich in another. He was meek like Moses, innocent like Samuel, merciful like David, wise like Solomon, of a great heart like St. Peter, fervent like St. Paul, gentle like St. John, and also like him in his diligence and care of the church. In faith and charity he imitated all the apostles.

While he was bishop, the Goths, having sacked Rome and destroyed a great part of Italy, went to Nola, where they were not less cruel than they had been in other places, robbing, sacking, destroying, and making many prisoners. St. Paulinus was among those whose losses were heavy, because they stole not only the ornaments of his church, but everything that he had in his house. St. Augustine writes that when he saw the ruin of his church and his house, he turned to God and said: "Lord, my treasure and my portion is above with thee, little do the losses of this world move me."

St. Gregory records minutely one famous act which St. Paulinus did after this ruin, which was this: among the other prisoners who were made slaves was the son of a poor widow, who had only this one child; and he was carried to Africa, where he was in the hands of the son-in-law of the king of the Vandals, who was governor of that province.

The disconsolate mother, having ascertained this, went to consult the holy prelate, praying him to tell her how she might regain her son. But he, who had nothing left to give her, said to her: "Lady, I will give you myself. Take me to Africa and change me for your son." The lady thought he was in jest, but he spoke to her with so much eloquence that she was finally persuaded, and they both passed into Africa and laid the case before the pagan, the master of the young man, who asked Paulinus if he knew

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any trade. He replied: "No," but that he knew how to cultivate and take care of a garden. This pleased the barbarian, and satisfied by his good presence, he returned to the lady her son, and gave Paulinus the care of the garden of his palace.

Here the saint remained some days, and besides taking great care that the garden should be kept in good order, whenever it was the hour of his master's dinner, he always brought him something — either fruit, flowers, or salads; and everything in such good condition that the pagan was much pleased with his services and took him into favour, often conversing with him, being gratified at finding him always courteous and well informed.

One day Paulinus said to his master: "My Lord, bear this in mind, and make what preparations are needful, for the king your associate will shortly die." The master of Paulinus told this to the king as the saying of his gardener, and that if he cared to see him he could do so by dining with him, as he always brought him at that hour some delicacy from the garden. When the king saw Paulinus he was much disturbed, and afterwards said privately to his son-in-law: "Your gardener has spoken the truth. Know that last night I dreamed that I was before certain rigorous judges, who threatened me with death, and he was one of them. Ask him who he is, and compel him to tell you the truth." The son-in-law of the king took Paulinus aside and asked him who he really was. The saint replied: "I am your gardener and slave." "I do not enquire," said his master, "what you are now, but what you were in your own country." The saint, seeing that he was compelled to declare himself, told him, to the great wonder of the barbarian, that he was a bishop. He told him to ask whatever he desired, and to return to his own land; and he asked for all the slaves from Nola who were in that kingdom; and the barbarian willingly granted his request, and they were sought out; and he having given them great store of corn as a testimony of respect to the venerable prelate, they thankfully returned to Nola in his company.

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That which Paulinus had foretold of the death of the king soon came to pass, God punishing him for the great cruelties he had wrought in many places, ruining cities and destroying kingdoms; for he died a death sudden for the body and eternal for the soul. Paulinus returned to his bishopric, having added this to his other good works, in which he followed the footsteps of the Son of God, who made Himself a servant that He might set us free from the bondage of sin.

At last, while in the exercise of holy works, the end of his life drew near. He was attacked severely by great pain, and during his illness he was visited by two bishops, one named Simaco and the other Benedetto, whose presence gave him much comfort. With a great effort he rose from his bed, and having an altar prepared in his chamber, he celebrated the mass, the two prelates assisting him. He then returned to his bed, and after remaining silent some little time, he asked: "Where are you, my brothers?" A servant, supposing he was asking for the two bishops who were present, said: "They are here." The saint answered: "I am not asking for them, but for Januarius and Martin, who have been speaking with me, and who said they would soon return."

This Januarius was a bishop and martyr, the master and the glory of the church at Naples; and Martin was the holy bishop of Tours, so well known and celebrated in the church of God; these both came to visit Paulinus at the hour of his departure, who immediately began to sing those verses of the psalms: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord who made heaven and earth." There was present a priest called Postumius, who was his majordomo, who grieved much to see him die, and also because he left many debts on account of the alms which he had given. And hearing the bishop singing, he thought it a good opportunity to ask him what was in his mind; so he said to him: "My Lord and father, how shall your debts be paid? Know that forty soldi are due for clothes given to the poor, and there is nothing to pay them with, and all that you

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leave, were it sold, would not bring so much." The saint, hearing this, smiled and said: "Take no thought, my son Postumius; all those debts will be paid, which are incurred for love of the poor."

Not many hours after — as all present witnessed — a priest arrived from Lucania, sent by the holy Bishop Exuperantius and Ursatius his brother; who brought from them, as a gift, fifty soldi. Paulinus accepted it, thanking God, and saying: "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who dost not forget those who hope in Thee." He gave two of the fifty soldi to the priest who brought them, and ordered that his debts should be paid with the rest. He passed this night in much pain, and when he saw the dawn he sent for many of his priests and exhorted them that they should live in peace together, that they should befriend and assist each other, and should be of one heart for God's service; with many other wise and holy counsels. He then remained silent until the hour of vespers, when he asked for a lighted candle, and taking it in his hand, he said: "O Christ my light! appear to me." He spent the time until the fourth hour of the night, partly in prayer and partly in meditation, in presence of many people, who were around his bed and in his room, expecting his departure; when suddenly they felt an earthquake, and at this moment the soul of this blessed saint was carried to heaven. All the world mourned for him, and his church wept to have lost such a father, but heaven rejoiced to have gained such a saint. The poor lamented, and the angels gave thanks.

He died on the twenty-second of June, and the church celebrates his feast on that same day, which was, according to Trithemius, in the year of the Lord four hundred and twenty, Honorius and Valentinian being emperors. It is commonly supposed that this saint introduced the use of metals, as before his time they made use of instruments of wood instead; and for this reason bells are called Nola in Latin, taking the name of the city where they were first adopted, while some call them Campana, from Campana, the name of the province in which is the city of Nola.

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The history of the seven sleepers, martyrs.

DECIUS, the Roman emperor, being in Ephesus, a city of Asia, caused all the people of the country around to be assembled to offer a solemn sacrifice to his false gods; and many Christians who found themselves in that country, both priests and people, fled in all directions.

The emperor offered the sacrifice in the midst of the public square, and observing that the Christians absented themselves, he published an edict against them that they should be arrested.

Many of them were made prisoners, and some of them, through fear of the cruel torments with which they were threatened, denied the faith and sacrificed to the idols; which was the cause of great grief to the other Christians, who lamented that these poor creatures for the safety of their bodies forgot the loss of their souls.

Many who remained constant in the faith of Jesus Christ were put to death and their bodies left in the squares; and the heads of many were cut off and placed on pikes to strike terror to the hearts of others. It happened that seven young Christians, — sons of the principal people of that city, — whose names were Massimiliano, Imblico, Martino, Giovanni, Dionisio, Essucustadio, and Antonio, repaired together to a church, and while Decius expected them at his sacrifice, they offered prayers to God with many sighs and tears, praying him to have compassion on his faithful ones. Some of the household of the emperor overheard them and informed him that these seven young men — one of them, Massimiliano, being the son of the president of the city of Ephesus — were in prayer in the church of the Christians.

The emperor ordered them to be summoned, and demanded why they did not sacrifice to his gods, to which they gave reason that they desired to worship the Lord alone, who created the heavens and the earth, and not idols who were but vain things, and their worship ruin to the soul. Decius, refusing to hear more, ordered that they should be stripped

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of the military robes, which they wore as nobles, and of their collars of gold, and allowed them a certain time to deliberate on what they would do, with the intention if they remained firm in their resolution to have them put to death. They, seeing the great danger in which they stood, and having liberty for some days, succeeded in selling all their goods, and part of the price they gave to the poor and part they reserved for themselves. They afterwards ascended a mountain and entered a cave, with the hope of remaining concealed; and they prayed God to grant them strength to endure the torments that awaited them, that they might become conquerors.

The place where these saints were hidden was called Mount Oclon; here they remained some days, and sent one of their number, Imblico, to the city disguised as a beggar, to know how matters stood and to buy food.

The emperor had been absent from the city for some days, and having returned, began as before to put the Christians to death, using great cruelty towards them. Imblico, having ascertained this and purchased a little food, returned to the cave and told his companions these things; and how the officers of justice were searching for them by order of the emperor, that they might either sacrifice to idols or be put to death. When the saints heard this they were in great fear and shed many tears, asking help of God. They exhorted each other to eat the bread which Imblico had brought, that they might be the stronger for the battle; and seating themselves in the middle of the cave they ate, it being then sunset; and while they were speaking with each other they slept, and it pleased the omnipotent Lord that their sleep should be as it were a new kind of death for a time, that He might afterwards show to the world His wonders.

Decius, having a great desire to find these seven youths, and failing to do so, sent for the parents of some of them and threatened them severely, to compel them to reveal where their sons were. They confessed to him that they were concealed in a cave on Mount Oclon, with the resolution to lay down their lives rather than sacrifice to the idols.

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The emperor was terribly enraged by this and commanded that the entrance to the cave should be closed with great stones, that the saints should thus be buried alive.

The emperor had two servants in his court who were secretly Christians, one named Theodoro and the other Barbo; and they thought that, in order that the memory of these martyrs should not be lost, and that if ever the cave was opened and the bodies were found the history of their martyrdom should also be discovered, it would be well to make some memorial of it. With this intention they wrote all that had occurred on some leaden plates and placed them in a metal box, which they closed and sealed with two seals and hid secretly among the stones at the mouth of the cave. Decius died, and all that age passed, and the empire came into the hands of now one and now another, and at last of Theodosius, the second of the name, who was a Catholic and a good Christian, jealous for the honour of God.

In his time some heretics were found who held the same opinions as the Jews and the Sadducees, denying the universal resurrection. This heresy displeased the emperor much, and he desired that some new event might happen by which these heretics should see their error, and the Lord gratified his pious desire in this manner. The owner of the mountain of the cave of the seven sleepers was named Adolio, and he owned many cattle, who went to feed on the mountain; and wishing to make a wall within which they might be safe at night, he determined to make use of the stones which were at the mouth of the cave. Taking first one and then another, he made an opening so large that any one could enter or pass out freely.

At this time the same Lord who, calling with a loud voice, brought Lazarus to life after four days' death, awaked these seven young men from their sleep of two hundred years. When they awaked it was early morning, and they wished each other a good day, thinking they had slept but one night; for neither they nor their clothes had suffered any more change than if they had been there but one day. They then

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began to converse of the persecution of Decius and asked questions of Imblico of what he had already told them; and they begged him to return again to the city, to watch the progress of events; and they gave him money to buy bread. Imblico consented to do as they desired, and going out from the cave, he wondered to see there such a multitude of stones, which he had not seen when he entered; and he wondered much more when he came to the city and saw a cross over the gate; and he thought within himself that it was some device of Decius to discover the Christians who passed through, that he might have them taken; and for this cause he would not enter that gate, but went to another, where he also found a cross; and filled with astonishment, he thought he must have made some mistake, and that this was not Ephesus, but some other city; and going in he enquired the name of the city and was answered: "Ephesus;" and reaching the square, he heard one swearing by the name of Jesus Christ, and he said to himself in amazement: "What miracle is this? All who called themselves Christians were but yesterday condemned to death, and to-day the name of Christ is in the mouth of every one in the square; either I am beside myself or some treachery is planned in this city, and I will depart from it while I may; but it will be well first to buy some food to take to my companions whom I left in the cave."

Thinking thus, he went to buy some bread, and when he paid for it, the baker said: "What money is this? I do not know it." The money was silver and bore the image of Decius, and was passed from hand to hand by those in the square, all desiring to see it; and every one was of opinion that this stranger, who came disguised as a poor beggar, must have found some hidden treasure. A crowd soon collected about him, at which he wondered still more, seeing that only the day before, as he thought, he was known by all as an illustrious person, and now no one recognized him. He looked carefully to see if he could discover his father or his brothers, but in vain.

These things coming to the knowledge of the governor, who

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was at that time, by divine Providence, in company of the archbishop, whose name was Stephen, he commanded that the stranger who had that money should be brought before him. And when the governor and the archbishop saw the piece of money, they knew it had been coined in the time of Decius; and they asked Imblico of what place he was, and who had given him that money; and he answered that he was born in that city and had parents and brothers there, and as for the money, he did not know why it was singular, as it was the usual money spent in that city; he also told the names of his father and his brothers, but no one could be found who had any knowledge of them. The governor said to him: "That which thou sayest cannot be true, for if thou wert born here and hadst a father and brothers here, some one could be found who would know them; and this money is of the time of Decius two hundred years ago." Imblico did not know what to say, but looked around him, first at one, then at another, so that many said: "He must be mad;" others said: "He is not really mad, but he pretends to be so that he may not be compelled to reveal the treasure he has found; he should be put to torture and made to confess the truth." The governor commanded that he should be thrown into prison, but Imblico said: "There is no cause to imprison or to torture me, for I speak the truth; but tell me one thing — is the Emperor Decius alive?" The bishop answered him: "My son, there is no one in this country called Decius." "Then," said Imblico, "come with me to a cave on Mount Oclon, and I will show you my companions, who will assure you that I tell the truth; which is, that to fly from the fury of the Emperor Decius, we hid ourselves in that cave, and I yesterday saw him enter into this city, if indeed this be Ephesus, which it appears to me it is not."

The bishop, thinking that God would reveal some miracle by means of this youth, said: "Let us go and ascertain the truth;" and the governor and all the principal men of the city went with him to the cave. As the bishop was about to enter the cave, by the divine will he saw on one side the sealed

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metal box, in which was written the story of these saints, who were there called martyrs; and the box being opened, its contents were read in the presence of all, and made them wonder exceedingly; and they began to praise the Lord, who had wrought so great a miracle by means of these His servants; and entering into the cave, they found the six others seated there, conversing together, and their faces shining with great splendour. All threw themselves at their feet, doing them reverence, and from them they heard all that Decius had done, which confirmed that which was inscribed on the leaden plates. The governor informed the Emperor Theodosius of this miracle, who returned thanks to God for this true witness and proof of the resurrection of the body against the heretics of that time, who denied it.

The emperor desired to see these sainted youths with his own eyes, and for this reason went to Ephesus, and entering the cave spoke with them, embracing them and shedding many tears of devotion; for all who beheld them were greatly moved.

One of them, named Massimiliano, said to the emperor: "In reward of thy great faith, and because thou hast undertaken the defence of the truth against the heretics, who deny the doctrine of the resurrection, God hath granted thee stability in thy kingdom, and will defend thee against all thine enemies, if thou fail not in His service." These words gave great joy both to the emperor and to all who heard them; and after this, these youthful saints bowed their heads to the ground in prayer, and in this manner rendered their blessed souls to God. The emperor caused their bodies to be placed in seven coffins, and in consequence of a revelation which he received from those saints the following night, they were left in that same cave. After these things the bishop collected his clergy and ordered that the festival of these saints should be celebrated on the anniversary of their death, which was the twenty-sixth of July, in the reign of the above-named Theodosius the Second, about the year of the Lord four hundred and sixty.

Olaus Magnus, in the first book of the history of the Lom-

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bards, recounts that in the farthest part of Germany, on the shore of the Mare Oceana, is a cave under a great stone, in which are seven men who sleep, who may be seen by all. It is not known who they are nor when they entered the cave. They are perfect, with good countenances, and are clothed according to the custom of the ancient Roman Christians, and their robes are still fresh. A stranger, but of that same country, once entered the cave, intending to burn the hand of one of them to waken him; but his own hand and arm withered suddenly, and so remained. It may be presumed that God keeps them here, that when it may please Him they may preach to that people, who are idolaters.

The life of the glorious martyr Saint Lorenzo, Archdeacon of Rome. Written by the notaries of Rome, and recounted by Laurentius Surius.

AS the history of the imprisonment and martyrdom of this glorious saint is beyond doubt, having been written by the notaries of Rome, and accepted by many saints who have related it, so it is uncertain who was the tyrant by whom he was condemned to martyrdom. It is commonly said to have been Decius; but if the lives of the emperors are compared with those of the popes, it is seen clearly that Decius had been dead some years at the time of the martyrdom of Pope Sixtus the Second, who was put to death three days before St. Lorenzo; the authors of great exactness as regards dates assert that Gallienus the son of Valerian was emperor, Valerian being at that time imprisoned by the King of Persia, who, having taken him in a passage of arms, kept him in an iron cage, and whenever he wished to mount on horseback, placed his foot on his shoulder. Valerian bore this disgrace for some time, but at last, seeing the neglect and indifference of Gallienus his son to liberate him, died of rage and melancholy. The Emperor Decius had already died in a battle against the Goths when, seeing himself and all his army put to rout and fearing that he should be made prisoner,

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he entered fully armed into a quagmire, and thus committed suicide.

Such were the deaths of these two emperors for their great cruelties to the Christians. Giovanni Lucido says that at the time of St. Lorenzo's martyrdom Gallienus was emperor; and he also says that Decius, who caused St. Lorenzo to be taken, was not the Emperor Decius, but a son of the Emperor Gallienus, who was a Cæsar and aided his father in the government of the empire.

Tribello Pollione says that this Decius was consul of Rome at that time. Giovanni Lucido also says that Valerian, who assisted at the martyrdom of St. Lorenzo, was a prefect of Rome, a son of the Valerian who was in prison, and a brother of the Emperor Gallienus. Decius Cæsar, who by some is called emperor, caused Pope Sixtus the Second to be arrested in Rome, whose archdeacon was St. Lorenzo, that is to say, the principal head of all the other deacons.

Lorenzo was of the Spanish nation, and of a city called Osca, in the kingdom of Aragon. His father and mother were saints, the one named Orentio and the other Patientia, and the feasts of both are celebrated in the church of Osca. Nothing more is known of the life of St. Lorenzo until the beginning of his martyrdom, and so nothing can be told. He went to Rome in his early youth, as he himself told the tyrant who put him to death, and was not brought from Spain by St. Sixtus, as some have supposed; for though it has been affirmed that St. Sixtus went to Spain, it is without foundation, as his pontificate lasted but a short time, and his labours were great, on account of the tyrants and heretics who persecuted the church.

It is not to be doubted that St. Lorenzo led a most holy life in Rome, and was a great pattern of good works, because St. Sixtus had made him his archdeacon and had placed the treasures of the church in his keeping; which were, as St. Ambrose says, some money which he had for the support of his ministers and for alms for the poor Christians.

There were also some vases of gold and silver and vestments of price, for the service of the altar, which had been

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given to the church by rich and devout people; such as the two Filippi, emperors, Julian, Mammea the mother of the Emperor Alexander Severus, Flavia Domitilla, and other persons who were Christians and made rich presents to the church. Pope Sixtus — being in prison, and the officers taking him from one prison to another, where he was to receive sentence of death — not consenting to worship idols, St. Lorenzo, who had always accompanied him in his life, thought it his duty to bear him company also in his martyrdom; so coming near him, he said to him: "Where art thou going, my father, without thy son? Where is the holy priest thus hastening without his officer? Thou art not accustomed to offer the sacrifice upon the altar without thy deacon, and now that thou art about to offer thine own blood, dost thou not desire me in thy company? Tell me, my father, how have I displeased thee that thou hast thus left me? Hast thou found my services so unworthy that I do not deserve to be with thee? Dost thou perhaps fear that I cannot follow thee? Put me to the proof, and thou shalt see what I am. Thou hast given me the charge of distributing the blood of Jesus Christ to the faithful in the holy communion, and hast refused to me to share in thy blood by being thy companion in death, and mingling mine with thine. Abraham sought to sacrifice, not himself but his son, to God. St. Peter permitted his deacon, St. Stephen, to die before him. Do thou the same; send me before thee, or at least be satisfied to let me go in thy company."

These and other like words said the valorous Lorenzo to his father and master, St. Sixtus, shedding many tears, with more desire for death than others have for life. The venerable saint replied to him: "My son, I neither leave thee nor abandon thee; I assure you that your warfare will be harder and more severe than mine. I, an old man, and of failing strength, shall soon finish my course; but you, young and valiant, will gain a greater triumph over the tyrant, as your tortures will be much more cruel. Do not mourn, thinking it will be long before this shall be, for in three days thou shalt find thyself at the same pass where I now am, and Lorenzo

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the Levite shall follow Sixtus the priest. It is not fitting that thou shouldst die in my company, lest it should appear as if thou, weak and of little courage, had need of a master to teach thee how to die, and thus thou wouldst lose that honour which thou wilt gain by dying alone. Elijah left Elisha, and Elisha, deprived of him, was able to work greater miracles than he had done. Thus will it be with thee, who without me will have strength and power to make a glorious end, by which thou wilt acquire so much more fame than I, as thy sufferings shall be greater than mine. One command I give you, to go without delay and give the treasures of the church to the poor, for they are in danger of falling into the hands of the tyrant."

Lorenzo went immediately to execute the pontiff's commands, and collecting the treasures of the church, he began to walk about Rome, seeking to whom to give them. He arrived at night upon Mount Celio, at the house of a Christian widow named Cirica, who concealed many Christians who had fled for fear of the persecution; and he washed their feet and distributed many alms among them. Thence he went to the Vicus Patricius between the Esquiline and Viminal hills, and here in the cave called Nepotiana were seventy Christians, men and women. St. Lorenzo took water in a basin and washed the feet of all the men, kissing them with great humility; and afterwards gave charity both to them and to the women. In this manner he dispensed the greater part of the treasures of the church, and the vessels which were to be preserved for the service of the altar he placed in safe keeping.

St. Lorenzo spent all that day and night in this manner, practising in these works compassion and humility, and preparing himself for martyrdom. Having fully accomplished the desire of St. Sixtus, it chanced that as St. Lorenzo came out from the Nepotiana cave, when it was daybreak, he saw the pontiff led to execution, and with him two deacons, Felicissimus and Agapitus, and advancing to meet them, he said in a loud and mournful voice: "Do not abandon me, holy father. I have done as thou hast ordered; I have

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distributed the treasures that were in my care." The saint repeated this several times, and the officers of justice, hearing the word treasures, took Lorenzo and put him in prison and gave information that the archdeacon of Sixtus, who had the keeping of the treasures, was in prison. This pleased Decius, who ordered that Lorenzo should be brought before him; which was accordingly done. And Decius asking where were Sixtus's treasures, Lorenzo did not answer a word, though he was asked many times; and Decius sent him to Valerian the prefect, directing him to discover where the treasures were, and to compel him to sacrifice to the gods, and that unless he could accomplish these two things, St. Lorenzo was to be cruelly tortured.

Valerian gave him in custody to one named Hippolitus, who shut him up in a prison where were many other prisoners, and among them a Gentile named Lucillus, who having been a long time in prison, had shed so many tears in his misery that he had lost his sight. St. Lorenzo, filled with a living faith, offered to cure him if he would believe perfectly in Jesus Christ and be baptized. Lucillus promised everything, and St. Lorenzo baptized him and restored his sight by the sign of the cross. There were many among the prisoners who were blind, who, knowing of Lucillus's cure, recommended themselves to St. Lorenzo and were all cured by him by the same means.

Hippolitus, seeing these works of St. Lorenzo, became his friend, and in conversation with him asked him where the church treasures were. The saint, knowing his intention in part, said to him: "O Hippolitus, if thou wilt believe in God the Father Omnipotent, and in Jesus Christ His Son, I promise to show thee not only many treasures, but life eternal, of which thou shalt partake." By these words of St. Lorenzo, and by giving him better information of the Christian faith, Hippolitus was converted and baptized, together with his family, nineteen persons in all; and it pleased God to grant that the souls of those who were baptized were seen to become beautiful and lovely. Hippolitus could not satisfy himself in thanking St. Lorenzo for the

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good he had done him. Valerian sent for St. Lorenzo and ordered that he should be brought to his palace; and when he saw him, the prefect spoke to him mildly, exhorting him not to remain obstinate, but to reveal the place where the treasures were concealed. St. Lorenzo answered him that he would show him the treasures willingly, if he would grant him three days' time to collect them together. "I am content," said Valerian; and giving a charge to Hippolitus to have the care of Lorenzo, and not to lose sight of him, all three were well satisfied, Valerian thinking himself sure of the treasures, Hippolitus happy to enjoy the society of Lorenzo for three days, and he well content to finish distributing all that still remained, and to put in order some things relating to his office of archdeacon; and to accomplish all this he needed the company and assistance of Hippolitus, who had been ordered not to leave him; for God often changes the counsels of men, who seek to oppose themselves to Him, and makes them become instruments and occasions, that His holy will should be the better done.

The third day having come, St. Lorenzo brought to Valerian all the Christians whom he had been able to collect together, and told him that these were the treasures of the church. Decius had also come at the time appointed, to see if St. Lorenzo had brought the treasures. But seeing how matters stood, and thinking that he was making a jest of them, they were both filled with rage; and Decius ordered that Lorenzo's flesh should be torn with hooks of iron called scorpions — from their resemblance to the claws of that creature. There were then shown to the glorious martyr, St. Lorenzo, all the dreadful and cruel instruments with which they were used to torment the Christians; and this was done to terrify him, that he might reveal the treasures of the church and sacrifice to the idols. But the valorous martyr said that he had always desired this food for his better nourishment. Decius said to him: "If thou callest this food, we will send thee where thou wilt find other madmen like thyself, that thou mayest keep a feast in their company." St. Lorenzo replied: "Those of whom you speak

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already enjoy the glory of God in heaven, whom you are unworthy to behold."

Decius, seeing that the firmness of Lorenzo was such that he could not be easily moved, that he might the more conveniently endeavour to subdue it, sent him chained to the palace of Tiberius, on Mount Palatine, and commanded that his tribunal should be prepared in the temple of Jove, which was also there. In this place Decius questioned St. Lorenzo again respecting the treasures of the church, and ordered him to name all those who, like himself, profaned the sacrifices of the gods, that he might put them to death and the city be purified of this sacrilegious people. He exhorted him also to sacrifice to the gods, and to put no faith in the treasures he had concealed, for they could not deliver him from the torments which were prepared for him. The saint answered: "I put my trust in the treasures of heaven, which are the mercy and compassion of God, with which He will sustain me so that my soul will remain free, though my body shall suffer many torments."

Decius now commanded that he should be beaten according to the Roman custom, and then be suspended in the air while his sides were burnt with plates of heated iron. While the martyr was in this torture he raised his voice and thanked God and said: "My Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God and very God, have mercy upon me Thy servant; for being accused, I have not denied Thee, and being questioned, I have confessed Thee." Decius said: "I believe thou art a magician and makest light of these torments by thine incantations, but I swear by the immortal gods that either thou shalt sacrifice or that thou shalt be tortured as no man has ever yet been." St. Lorenzo replied: "In the name of Jesus Christ, I do not fear thy tortures, which will soon have an end. Execute thy pleasure, and be not weary."

Decius commanded that he should be again tortured, which was done; and St. Lorenzo made a prayer to God, praying that He would be pleased to receive his soul in heaven; and there was a voice heard, which said that much still remained for him to suffer. Decius and all who were present

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heard this voice, but becoming only more cruel, he said: "Do you not see, O Romans, that the demons aid this sacrilegious man, who fears neither the gods nor our princes, and who makes light of torture?" He then commanded that he should be tormented by the rack and other cruel instruments too painful to describe; and while the saint was in this agony, a soldier named Romano who was present, being enlightened by the Holy Spirit, saw near St. Lorenzo a beautiful youth, who with a handkerchief wiped his face and the wounds of his body. And as the saint was again led to prison by Hippolitus, by the order of Decius, the good soldier went to find him with a vase of water, and kneeling down before him, prayed him with great earnestness to baptize him. St. Lorenzo baptized him, and in consequence Romano was taken, beaten, and then beheaded. Decius and Valerian concluded, after consulting together, that Lorenzo by the help of magic suffered little from torture, and they ordered that he should be brought that night to the baths of Olimpiade, near the palace of Sallustius, to be tormented again. They decided to endeavour thus to gain their purpose, thinking he might be less courageous in the darkness and obscurity of night.

In this short time the saint had some repose. Hippolitus begged him every day, with tears, to give him permission to declare himself a Christian, and to suffer with him; but St. Lorenzo would not grant it, saying that now he must hide Jesus Christ in his heart, because the time would soon come to declare himself and to die for His love. Decius and Valerian coming together to the place where St. Lorenzo had been brought, Decius said to him: "Leave now the arts of magic which thou hast practised, and declare of what nation thou art." Lorenzo replied: "I am a Spaniard, brought up in Rome, baptized in my youth, and instructed in holy and divine laws." "Enough," said Decius, "thou must resolve to sacrifice to the gods or all this night shall be spent in tormenting thee." "If so it shall be," replied Lorenzo, "the night will be no longer dark to me, but light and full of joy."

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All the happiness and content of the holy martyr were causes of anger and disdain to Decius, who sought no longer the treasures which were his first object; neither did he care that he was a Christian, which was his second motive for having him tortured; but he desired to gratify his rage and fury, and revenge himself against the martyr; and at last he devised a most cruel torment by which he made him die. This was to have him stretched on a bed of iron, made in the form of a gridiron, so large that it could support his holy body, and to have a small fire placed under it, so that he should be burnt little by little, that the torture and death should be more cruel, being so slow, and his sufferings be thus prolonged. And because Decius and Valerian were present, the officers were eager to keep up the fire, adding charcoal, and removing the ashes when needed. St. Lorenzo said to Decius: "Know, wretched man, that these coals are to me only refreshment, but will be for your eternal pain; for God has seen that being accused, I have not denied Him, that being questioned, I have confessed Him, and that now, being burned alive, I thank Him."

Those who were present were astonished at the cruelty of Decius in having a youth so courteous and of so noble presence burnt alive only through greediness of treasure; and all were of opinion that Lorenzo had no treasure, because he endured such cruel tortures.

It was now some time that this had continued, and the flame, increasing, penetrated so much that one side was entirely burnt; and after all this the glorious Lorenzo, to gain full victory over the tyrant, said to him: "See, miserable man, that one side of my body is burnt; have me turned that the other may be so also, seeing that the riches of the church which thou seekest have been carried to heaven by the hands of the poor." Thus the glorious martyr triumphed over the tyrant, so that he remained astonished and discomfited. The saint then addressed himself to Jesus Christ and said to Him: "I thank Thee, my Lord and my God, that I have merited to enter in through the door of Thy blessedness;" and thus saying, his glorious soul passed from this

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life to be crowned in heaven, where his merits are more clear and resplendent than the flames which burnt his body.

When Decius saw that the saint was dead, he was filled with horror and amazement, and he left that place and went to the palace of Tiberius, accompanied by Valerian, leaving the holy body of the martyr upon the gridiron; and early in the morning, Hippolitus, with the assistance of Justinus the priest, took it from that place and buried it in a piece of land belonging to Chiara a widow, in the Via Tiburtina. They were accompanied by many Christians, who remained there three days, fasting night and day, and shedding continual tears for the love of Lorenzo the archdeacon, who did good to all and was by all so much beloved. At the end of three days Justinus celebrated mass and gave the communion to all who were present, and they then dispersed; for they had begun to proceed with rigour against those who had buried St. Lorenzo, and Hippolitus, as the head of them, was imprisoned; and when Valerian understood that he was a Christian, he caused him to be put to death by being dragged at the heels of a horse.

God did not permit that these two tyrants should escape without punishment for their cruelty, for a few days after, Decius and Valerian went together to a public feast which was held in the Roman amphitheatre, and suddenly they felt themselves tormented by demons and cried out with a loud voice and lamented, Decius saying that Hippolitus had chained him, and Valerian saying that Lorenzo was tormenting him with fire. Valerian died miserably in the presence of Decius, and he, after having been three days in mortal agony, complaining now of Hippolitus and now of Lorenzo, saying that both were tormenting him with the fires of hell, finished his life miserably.

This is not a small testimony to the greatness of this saint, that God caused Decius, who had brought St. Lorenzo to such a cruel death, to die in this manner. The suffering of St. Lorenzo lasted not long, but the suffering of Decius, on account of St. Lorenzo, will last for all eter-

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nity. It was but just that God should defend His saint at the time of his death by punishing his enemies, since he had spent all his life in His service, and had withheld nothing that he did not sacrifice to God: goods, contentment, care and diligence in the service of the church, compassion for the poor, fortitude, constancy in resisting the tyrant; body and soul, flesh and blood, life and death, all things he offered to God; and God in reward for this granted him an honourable and worthy place in His glory, and caused him to be honoured in the church on earth by many festivals and universal solemnities; since there is no city or country where may not be found a church dedicated to St. Lorenzo. The Emperor Constantine caused a church to be built at Rome in his honour, where his body was deposited. St. Damasus the pope built another; and besides these, there are three other churches of St. Lorenzo in Rome, built on the places where he was tortured. In all Italy, and other countries of Christendom, the principal churches are dedicated to St. Lorenzo. There are also many in Spain, but one — lately built by the Catholic king, Philip the Second — surpasses all that ever were or are in Christian lands. This church is called the royal monastery of St. Lorenzo of the Escurial, near which there is a college, a seminary, and a hospital, which in magnificence of the buildings, in greatness of income, ornaments, books, number of priests, in charity to the poor, in the multitude of relics, in religious observances — which are of the last importance — is far before all other works of this kind which have been or now are in Christendom. All is well spent which is bestowed in honour of this saint, to whom the church pays high honours, having placed him in the canon of the mass, solemnizing his feast, and also the vigil, with services and fastings. And though Rome, the head of the church, had already its particular patrons so much renowned as St. Peter and St. Paul, still as the martyrdom of St. Lorenzo was so great and wonderful, it holds him as its particular advocate. And as St. Leo the pope says, not less was the city of Rome honoured by the death of St.

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Lorenzo than was the city of Jerusalem by that of St. Stephen. It is then but just that a saint so much honoured by God, by His church, by emperors, and kings should also be reverenced by us.

The church celebrates the feast of St. Lorenzo on the anniversary of his death, which took place on the tenth of August in the year of the Lord two hundred and forty-eight, Gallienus the son of Valerian being emperor.

The life of Saint Louis, King of France. Written by Ganfrado, his confessor, and by Clitoiro.

ST. LOUIS, King of France, was the son of another king, named Louis like himself, and of the queen Blanche, daughter of Don Alonzo, King of Castile.

His father died on his return from a war against the heretics in Toulouse, in which he had shown himself zealous for the faith of Jesus Christ, and devoted to the apostolic chair, through respect to which he undertook this war. He died young and greatly regretted; he was a devout Catholic, and servant of God, and disposed to works of virtue. When he died he left St. Louis his son, who was twelve years old, in care of his mother, Queen Blanche, who was his teacher and governed the kingdom with much prudence and justice, being a lady of wisdom and honourable customs. She sought to bring up her son as a Christian, and, by the counsel of some Dominican and Franciscan priests, placed him in the care of a wise and learned man, that he might be taught the sciences and good customs.

The holy youth, like another Solomon, early showed his disposition for that which he afterwards became. He was ingenuous, discreet, grave, pious, charitable, and devout, so that it is said that in all his life he never committed a mortal sin. His mother often said to him: "My son, I would prefer to see you dead before me, than to know you had committed a mortal sin against your Maker." His father died in the year of the Lord twelve hundred and thirty-seven;

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and he, being then twelve years old, was consecrated and crowned king, according to the custom of France.

When he was nineteen years old, by desire of his mother and of all the kingdom, he took for his wife Marguerite, daughter of the Count of Provence. By her he had children, and he caused them to be educated and instructed in all things which as Christians and children of a king they ought to know. He visited them often and examined them to see what they were learning, and, like another Tobias, exhorted them to live well, to fear God, and to do evil to none, and good to all.

And because example is often more effectual than words, the king kept his body in subjection by fasting and discipline, and secretly wore haircloth under his royal robes, and made many prayers and gave much to the poor, thus giving a worthy example to his children and all the kingdom. In the time of Lent and Advent he ate neither fish nor fruit. He fasted both Fridays and Saturdays. A hundred and twenty poor persons commonly dined in his palace, and on the principal feast days there were two hundred, and he placed them at the table and served them himself; and all this he did to honour Jesus Christ in the person of his poor. He was humble, like another David, not only in his heart, but he also showed himself so externally, wearing simple and not very costly robes, so that the very sight of him incited others to goodness. He punished blasphemers and perjured persons severely, and he commanded that those who were convicted of these sins should have their lips closed by bits of iron; and as he ordered that this penalty should be executed on a citizen of Paris, one of the principal men, there were not wanting those who called him a tyrant; which, when he heard, he said in the presence of many people: "Would to God that by having my own lips fastened I could banish from my kingdom all false oaths."

A certain captain of a band of assassins, named Arcida, having made a plot to have him murdered by treachery, St. Louis was warned of it, and had those who came to kill him arrested. But not only did he not punish them as he

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might have done and as they deserved, but he gave them presents and sent them back to their captain, but for the future kept with him a sufficient guard to obviate similar inconveniences. He made war with Ugo, Count della Marca, because, being his vassal, he had rebelled against him; and although the count had the King of England in his favour, still the holy king reduced him to such extremity that he was forced to sue for peace and give satisfaction for the error he had committed; and the good king granted it willingly, through the intervention of the queen his wife, who was the sister of the Queen of England. In his time the crusade against the infidels was declared, in the year of our salvation twelve hundred and fifty-eight, and he took the cross from the hands of the Bishop of Paris, and with his two brothers, Robert and Charles, and accompanied by all the principal lords of his kingdom, and by many of the French people, he crossed the sea and went to the Holy Land, where he made war.

He took by force of arms one of the principal cities of Egypt, called Damietta, and made friendship with the king of Tartary, called the Great Khan; and they exchanged gifts. God saw fit to prove him in this undertaking with diverse afflictions and calamities; and departing from Damietta with the greater part of his army, to conquer more countries, he met with many misfortunes and suffered great want of provisions. Matters came at last to such a pass that the king was taken prisoner with the greater part of his army. He then agreed with the Soldan of Egypt, who held him prisoner, on these terms, — that the king should give up the city of Damietta and should pay eight thousand byzants, which were coins of gold, for the expenses of the war, and that he should be set at liberty with all the French prisoners, and that he should retain possession of some places still held by the Christians in that country.

The king accepted these conditions with the advice of all his people, and also because he saw that the city of Damietta could neither be held nor defended, for of thirty-two thousand soldiers whom he had brought from France there remained

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only six thousand; the rest had all died of want and hardships or in battle.

These terms having been agreed to before the king was set at liberty, the soldan was murdered by the Moors, and the holy king and his followers were placed in extreme peril, for those who killed the soldan intended to kill them all, and their escape was truly wonderful; but God preserved him as by a miracle. These barbarians agreed with the king that the terms made with the soldan should be kept, with which conditions the king was satisfied and fulfilled all his promises; but they treated those who were in Damietta with great cruelty when they were given into their hands, though it had been agreed that they should pass out free with all their goods. They also treated those who were with the king very cruelly, for they would place a drawn sword at the breasts of the youths, telling them to deny Jesus Christ or they would kill them; and many of those who were constant in the faith died by their hands, and others did worse, for through fear of death they denied the faith and remained among the infidels.

All these things caused the greatest grief and pity to the holy king, but it especially pierced his heart to see the injuries which these perfidious pagans did to some sacred images which they found in Damietta. At last the king was set free, and it not seeming well to him to abandon those places which the Christians still held in that province, he decided to remain there with those soldiers who still survived, and to send his brothers back to France.

While the good king remained in that country, he set free many slaves, converted some infidels to the faith, and gained some territory for the Christians. St. Louis remained in the province of Syria five years, when he received intelligence of the death of his mother, who had been regent of France, so that he was compelled to return to his kingdom, where he was received by his vassals with incredible joy. He at once began to occupy himself with good and pious works, as had been his custom; he built hospitals, and monasteries where God was praised continually, and endowed

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them magnificently. He went often to visit the hospitals which he had founded, and tended the sick and wounded, particularly such as had bad wounds or contagious sicknesses.

He built a beautiful chapel in the royal palace at Paris, and there he deposited the crown of thorns with which Jesus Christ was crowned, and a great part of the cross, and the iron of the lance with which the holy side was pierced. All these things and many other relics were given to him by the Emperor of Constantinople in return for the great and precious gifts the king had made him. He was most devoted to the cross, and forbade that through all the kingdom it should be painted or otherwise represented upon the ground, for it had been the custom to place it upon the tombs in the cemeteries and churches, — and he ordered that it should be removed from all places whatever where it was liable to be trodden under foot. He said commonly all the service, and often in church with the priests or friars, and it displeased him at such times to be disturbed, except for affairs of the last importance. He celebrated a feast every year which lasted three days, in memory of the day on which he placed the holy relics in the chapel of the palace, and in these three days this saint was most cheerful and granted many favours. He was most anxious that justice should be done without respect of persons, and his officers and ministers feared him, because they saw that he was enlightened with celestial wisdom and that few things were hidden from him; and if they committed a fault through malice, he punished them with much rigour. But though he was much feared, he was more loved, because his goodness and mildness, accompanied with his royal majesty, gained the hearts of all.

Two days in the week he gave audience in some public place to listen to the complaints and lamentations of the poor and to relieve them, which he did promptly, doing justice to all. In his time he would not consent that tournaments or jousts or other military displays, which usually caused the death of several persons, should be held. He made a law against usurers, that they should not collect unjust

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usury in courts of justice, which put an end to the insatiable avarice of some usurers who were in his kingdom. This king had a singular power of reconciling quarrels and making peace between enemies, for he spoke with so much gentleness that he softened every heart, however haughty and violent; and differences, contentions, and evil speaking always displeased him, especially among relatives. The Duke of Geldria once went to visit him, and being afterwards asked how King Louis had appeared to him, he drew up his face with an expression of contempt. God punished him for this, for even while he was speaking his face remained twisted a little backwards, and lasted so all his life, to his great pain.

While King Louis was thus passing his life in good works, bearing himself worthily in the royal majesty of his office, he received intelligence that the few Christians who had remained in the Holy Land were in continual difficulties; and pitying them and feeling much regret that those holy places should be in the hands of the infidels, he took the resolution to return there once more. For this purpose he assembled a great army of the principal men of his kingdom and others, and being ready to embark with three of his sons, the King of Navarre, and other princes, he spoke with Philippe his oldest son, and with a cheerful face and with loving and gentle words, said to him: "Thou seest well, my son, that I am now an old man, and though it is time I was thinking of reposing in my kingdom, still for the defence of the honour of God I have undertaken this labour; and if it shall please God to give you the possession of this kingdom, now while you are young, do not think it a hard thing to do the same should the same cause again require it." The holy king embarked at Marseilles on the first day of March, in the year of the Lord twelve hundred and seventy, with Philippe, Jean, and Pierre his sons.

And since the city of Tunis, which is near the shore of Carthagena, was a great impediment to the voyage to the Holy Land, he decided to first make an attempt to take it. The army arrived at the port of Carthagena and the king

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landed on the shore with his followers, and by the secret judgment of God the soldiers were attacked by a pestilence — of which many of the Africans had died — which destroyed many of them, and of those who died one was Jean, the son of the king, besides other nobles of France. Not long after, the same illness attacked the king, which caused the greatest distress to all the army, because they saw plainly that he would not escape with his life. Words can hardly describe with how much holiness King Louis finished his life. He was in his bed and repeated many times that prayer which says: "Give us grace, O Lord, to despise the prosperity of this world and not to fear its adversity." And feeling his death approaching, he called Philippe his oldest son, who was to succeed him in his kingdom, and in the presence of many great lords, like another Tobias, he gave him many wise counsels, saying: "Seek, my son, to love God above all things, for no one without loving him can serve him. Never consent to mortal sin, but rather endure every kind of torment than condemn thy soul by such guilt. When adversity comes, bear it with a stout heart; keep in mind that thou hast deserved it, and thus it will be to thee the occasion of improvement. When everything goes on prosperously, thank God with humility; become not proud by reason of that which should but make thee more humble, and be not the worse for that which should make thee better. Confess often, and seek a wise confessor who can teach thee what to follow and what to avoid, and when thou art with him, be such in manner and countenance that he will have courage to reprove thee and to show thee the gravity of thy sins.

"Attend devoutly on divine services, lending no ear to fables or lies, nor let thine eyes wander here and there, but pray to God with thy heart and thy lips.

"Be always mild and benignant with the poor and afflicted; favour them with all thy strength. And if thou art intending to undertake something of importance, take counsel with thy confessor, or with some other holy and wise person, that thou mayest see clearly if it is best to do it. Choose thy

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friends and favourites from among those of good and virtuous lives and reputations, whether priests or laymen, and speak with them freely. Avoid always the conversation and society of the evil and vicious; listen with care to those preachers who seek to improve thee, who reprove vice, and are zealous for the honour and service of God. In whatsoever place thou art, let no one dare to speak in thy presence of things which incite to evil, or which are injurious to the fame of thy neighbour. Speak no evil of any one which may affect his reputation, and forbid that in thy presence any one should dare to murmur or speak lightly of God and his saints, and let not those escape unpunished who are guilty of such sins. Thank God every day for the benefits thou receivest from His hands, that thou mayest deserve to have them continued.

"In the administration of justice be upright and severe, observing the laws impartially, without favouring either side. Be not weary of the complaints of the poor, but seek to know the truth; and if any persons make complaints or feel themselves injured by thee, incline rather to their interest than thine own; let their cause be judged, and bring it to pass that those of thy council and parliament may pronounce a just sentence. If thou shalt discover that thou hast any possessions rightly belonging to others, even if thou shouldst have received them in inheritance from thy ancestors, delay not to restore them to their proper owners, if the truth be clear; but if the case be doubtful, lay it before wise and learned men, who may decide it and pronounce sentence without delay. Have the greatest care that thy subjects may enjoy justice and peace, but especially monks and priests, that discord and injustice may not disturb their prayers to God for thee and for thy kingdom.

"Maintain love, reverence, and obedience to thy elders and superiors. Give the ecclesiastical benefices only to those who are most worthy, and prevent others from holding them; and in this be guided by the counsel of prudent men. Make no war, and especially with Christians, without great cause, and after having sought good counsel, if then thou art com-

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pelled to make war, permit no harm to be done to any church or innocent person. When thou hast a difference with any one, seek reconciliation, and though it may not touch thee, endeavour to be a peacemaker among those who are at discord.

"Be careful that ministers of justice, priests, and other magistrates be discreet, learned, and experienced persons, and inform thyself secretly how they fulfil their duties. Let the expenses of thy household be moderate and reasonable. I charge thee and require thee to take an oath that if it shall please God to remove me from this life in this sickness, and thou shalt remain well and free, that thou wilt have prayers said for my soul through all the kingdom of France; and finally all that a good and loving father may ask or command of a good and loving son, that I ask and command thee.

"God keep thee from all evil, and grant thee grace always to live well, and in all things to do His will, so that He may be honoured by thee, and that after this life we may see, contemplate, and praise Him in His celestial glory through all ages. Amen."

This document the holy king gave to his son in the hour of his death. He afterwards requested the sacrament, which he received with much devotion, and commanded that a bed of ashes made in the form of a cross should be prepared for him, and with the words which Christ spoke when he expired, — "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," — he yielded his soul to the Lord, the same year in which he commenced this enterprise.

His death caused unbounded sorrow to all the army, and the Moors began to give them much annoyance. But though he was dead, and afterwards many of the principal men died, still Charles, King of Sicily, who was most valiant in arms, having taken the enterprise upon himself, reduced the city of Tunis to such straits that the king sued for peace on conditions most honourable to the Christians; namely, that all the Christian slaves should be at liberty to preach the faith of Jesus Christ in all the kingdom, and to baptize those whom they converted; and that the King of Tunis should pay every

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year forty thousand ducats as tribute to the King of Sicily. With these terms the Christians were satisfied, for many were dead and others dying every day, for the plague had not ceased.

The French returned to France with the body of King Louis, which was buried in the monastery of St. Dionysius; and Pope Boniface the Eighth, thirty years after, canonized him and placed him in the catalogue of the saints, having first informed himself of his holy life and of the many miracles which God wrought by his means, both before and after his death. The church celebrates the feast of this king on the twenty-fifth of August, which was the day of his death, and, as has been said, in the year of the Lord twelve hundred and seventy.

The life of Saint Augustine, bishop and doctor of the holy church. Selected from his own writings and from those of grave authors, but in particular those of Possidius, Bishop of Calama, his disciple.

THE glorious St. Augustine was born in the year of the incarnation of our Lord three hundred and sixty-seven, in the seventh year of the pontificate of Pope Liberius and the tenth of the reign of the Emperor Constantine, son of Constantine the Great, on the thirteenth day of the month of November, as he himself says in his book, "De vita beata." He was the son of a noble father, of the equestrian order — which was between those of the patrician and plebeian orders — named Patritius, and he was an unbeliever, as St. Antoninus relates; and his mother was called Monica, whose life and religion were such that through her tears and example the church now possesses so great a saint and so renowned a doctor as St. Augustine; of whom Bolfilas, an author of weight, writes that the same day on which Augustine was born in Africa gave birth to Pelagius in England — Pelagius the heretic, St. Augustine his great adversary. Thus may

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be seen the wonderful clemency of the Lord, who with the one hand inflicts the wound and with the other heals it.

St. Augustine was carefully trained in the study of human letters, in which he surpassed all others of his age, and at the age of nineteen years he lectured on grammar in public, and received a salary. He afterwards went to Carthage, which was the metropolis of Africa, where for the acuteness of his intellect there was also granted him a salary as lecturer on rhetoric. In those days the pestilent heresy of the Manichæans had spread widely in Africa, and as Augustine associated much with those infected with this error, he himself fell into it. They may with reason be called heretics who having been baptized held these errors; but Augustine, even though he had fallen into these false opinions, cannot be called a heretic, as he had not been baptized. This was the cause of great grief to his afflicted mother, and the more so that she saw him given to the sins of youth; for this is usually the course of those who commit one sin: they do not stop there, but fall into others. Thus did Augustine, who, being in the darkness of this error, transgressed in others, so that he had a son, to whom he gave the name Adeodatus.

It grieved his mother infinitely to see him thus absorbed in the things of the world, and she reproved him more with tears than severe words, knowing that to proceed otherwise with one of so proud and high a heart would be but adding fuel to the flame.

Augustine began to weary of remaining in Africa, and in order to bring his great acquirements before the world he determined to go to Rome, where he lectured on rhetoric to great audiences, with such high reputation that the city of Milan sending a syndic to obtain some one to lecture on rhetoric in that city, although Augustine had been only one year in Rome, nevertheless Simaco, who was the president of the administration of Italy, chose him to go to Milan for this purpose. Augustine acquired great fame in this city and was held in high esteem by the Emperor Valentinian, as Possidius relates in his history.

His disconsolate mother could not forget her son, and from

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Africa she followed him to Rome, and from Rome to Milan, — only for the desire she felt to guide his soul into that safe harbour which she was already so near. St. Ambrose was at this time Archbishop of Milan and preached often, it being one of the duties of his office; and St. Monica and Augustine her son both listened to him, but with different intentions — she to enjoy the charm of his doctrine, and her son to hear some curious novelty; and having himself great talent, and having heard much of the power of the preaching of St. Ambrose, he heard him willingly, to have an occasion of disputing with him, as he often did in private conversation; and not only with him, but with others who, though learned and skilful men, were much confounded by the subtlety of his logic and the keenness of his intellect, so that, as is told by Ambrogio Coriolano, St. Ambrose commanded that in the litany should be sung: "From the logic of Augustine, Good Lord deliver us."

The society and conversation of St. Ambrose and the tears of St. Monica so much affected him that he already began to despise the Manichæans and their practices, and to occupy himself in reading the holy scriptures. There was a monastery outside the wall of Milan in which, among the other monks, was a man named Simplicianus. Augustine went to converse with him and he, having been informed by St. Ambrose of his proud disposition, with much mildness and gentleness of speech, and zeal for the salvation of his soul, gradually discovered to him the errors into which he had fallen, and caused him to desire the evangelical life, which Jesus Christ had taught His followers. At last he said to him such and so many things that he disposed him to accept the Christian religion, following the church of Rome in all that it teaches and declares.

About this time Potianus, an African nobleman, his intimate friend, came to Milan; and having known the life which the Abbot St. Antonius led in Egypt, and his wonderful virtue and miracles, he related all these matters to Augustine. Augustine, hearing that such things were done by an unlearned man, with some anxiety which was in his heart, said

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to Alipius his friend: "How can we permit this? Shall the ignorant rob us of heaven, and we with our learning be cast into hell?"

The time now drew near in which He who orders all things by His profound wisdom dried the tears of His servant St. Monica and opened the eyes of His new captain Augustine. For this purpose He one day touched his heart, and he shed so many tears that he desired to be alone, and he went to a garden and seated himself under a fig tree, and calling on God with a loud voice, he said: "And Thou, O Lord, how long, how long shall Thine anger continue? How long shall I say, 'to-morrow, to-morrow'? O Lord, let me now return to Thee; open mine eyes and draw near to me. Inspire me, take possession of me, and show me the sweetness of Thy love. I have loved Thee late; old indeed, but new to me. Thou wast within me, but I sought Thee without. I have looked for Thee in those things which Thou hast made, and I have fallen into many sins. Thou wast in me, but I was blind. Thou hast called me and opened my ears and enlightened my eyes, and I hunger and thirst to draw near to Thee." St. Augustine afterwards spoke to St. Ambrose and requested baptism, and he assigned a certain day for it.

The holy prelate made him a catechumen, and after five months, on Holy Saturday, in company with Nebridius and Evodius, who were afterwards martyrs, and of Alipius, who became Bishop of Tegaste, Potianus and Adeodatus his son, Simplicius, Faustus and Gondolus, Justus and Paulinus, St. Augustine was baptized. St. Decius, who was the fourth archbishop of Milan after St. Ambrose, writes that when St. Ambrose poured the water upon his head and pronounced the words which are the form of this sacrament, that he said in a loud voice: "Te Deum laudamus," and Augustine answered: "Te Dominum confitemur"; and thus they composed this hymn to the end, each saying a verse alternately; and now the Catholic church adopts it in the morning service, and always as a thanksgiving to God for benefits received.

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In those times it was the custom for those who were baptized to be dressed in white, but to St. Augustine was given a black vest over his white robe, and he wore a leather girdle, which was different from those monks who live in solitude, who do not adopt it. This afterwards became the religious habit of his children in Jesus Christ, when he founded the order of the eremites, who are now called Augustines. He was thirty years old when he was baptized, and human language cannot describe the happiness of his holy mother at seeing her desire fulfilled. The joy of St. Ambrose, and of all the Catholics in Milan and other places was equally great when they had news of his conversion.

After this Augustine, in consequence of his mother's entreaties, decided to return with her to Africa; and St. Monica, burthened with years and labours, died at the port of Ostia, there being present with her her two sons, Augustine and Marigius, she being of the age of fifty-six years and Augustine thirty-three. After his mother's death he went to Centocelle, now called Civita Vecchia, near the sea, where some holy men lived the lives of hermits in some old edifices; who received St. Augustine with much love and reverence, having already heard of him.

In this place it is said he composed his book on the Trinity, and here he had the revelation of the child who dug a little ditch with his hands, and St. Augustine asking him why he did that, he answered that he intended to put all the sea in it. The saint laughed at the child's simple answer and told him that was impossible, but he replied: "This appears to thee a difficult thing, but I assure thee that thy undertaking of writing of the Trinity is much more difficult; for how canst thou with thy feeble intellect understand and penetrate into this high mystery?" So saying, the child vanished, and St. Augustine understood that he had been sent by God to warn him of his too great boldness, and so he wrote no more on this subject and tried to amend and correct that which he had already written. In the same place he composed the book of his soliloquies, and afterwards passed into Africa and went to his native place Tagaste, and

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here he spent what remained of his patrimony; part he gave to the poor, and with what remained he built a monastery in the desert, and accompanied by his son, brothers, and friends, determined to live according to the apostolic and monastic rule.

St. Valerius the Bishop of Hippona, having heard of the fame of Augustine, was well content, thinking he should find his aid valuable in the government of his church. This good bishop desired to have him often in his company, but St. Augustine excused himself as often as he could and avoided going to his church, fearing they would by force make him bishop of some one of those churches which were vacant. St. Valerius visited him and was well satisfied with the manner of life of Augustine and his monks, their charity, their loving words, their penitence, their simple table, and their humble beds; the life of these blessed people was like a picture of heaven.

Among the other monks who were in the monastery which St. Augustine had founded in the desert was one named Simplicius, whose father was murdered. And he, in the heat of the resentment natural to flesh and blood, left the monastery to go to revenge his father's death; and when St. Augustine heard this he, like a good shepherd, went to seek the lost sheep, and hearing that Simplicius was in the city of Hippona, he went there without delay. St. Valerius, being informed of the arrival of Augustine, called the people together, as Possidius relates, and informed them that his church stood in great need of a priest, such as is now called a curate; and as Augustine was a Catholic and very learned, he recommended them to elect him to that office; and this proposal pleasing the people, they did so unanimously. Though Augustine sought to excuse himself and to leave the place, he could not do so; for the people surrounded him and conducted him to the presence of St. Valerius in the church, who ordained him almost by force, and made him priest. St. Augustine wept and excused himself, saying that he was unworthy of the honour, but to no purpose. Possidius said the same, for being asked why he accepted

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this office so reluctantly, he replied: "Because the place for a priest and curate is very near the place for a bishop."

St. Augustine now began to preach with much profit to souls, both in that place and in others, for the zeal of making converts to God had induced him to change his condition and to be more conversant with the people. St. Valerius, not being satisfied with what he had done, convoked some bishops, and gaining to his side the Bishop of Carthage, they added force to force and consecrated Augustine bishop of the city of Hippona, with the title of his coadjutor. Augustine was now thirty-seven years old, and seeing himself a bishop, he began to occupy himself with the reformation of the church. He insisted particularly that the priests of the cathedral should live together in common, as was instituted by the apostles, and which practice was introduced in Alexandria by St. Mark; he assembled the clergy and gave them this rule, and they gave up all their private property, taking the three vows common to ecclesiastics. These and others who afterwards imitated them were called regular canons. Not long after, the Bishop St. Valerius died, and all the duties came upon Augustine. Adeodatus his son also died in Carthage; he was a youth of great hope, as St. Augustine says in the book of his confessions, and though a youth of only fifteen years, his intellect surpassed that of most men of mature age.

The care of his flock, which was a great labour for him, the number of books which he wrote, the important affairs in which he occupied himself, were not able to prevent Augustine from devoting many hours to God, spending them in prayer and meditation; but after his conversion he occupied his mind often in contemplating the high and wonderful mystery of the incarnation, which so much kindled his love that he said, shedding many tears: "O Lord, he who does not serve Thee for the blessing of creation deserves eternal punishment; but he who does not serve Thee and bless Thee for the benefit of the incarnation deserves that a more heavy punishment should be prepared for him; but I, O Lord, who thank Thee that Thou hast created me, hast ransomed

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me, hast converted me, and brought me from the state of darkness in which I was, what should I deserve if I should not serve Thee? Ah Lord, Thou hast pierced my heart with two arrows, the one of love and the other of fear. I fear, Lord, to be ungrateful for so many benefits; I love Him who has done so much for me through the love He has borne me. No one can know what God has done for me if I do not relate my unworthiness; how can his liberality in forgiving me be known unless I recount my debts? How shall I declare the wisdom of the physician who has cured me without also explaining my infirmities? Let my wounds and my sins then be known, that the great goodness of God may be seen, who knew them and how they should be healed. My sins praise the Lord who chose for His son him who had been the slave of Lucifer; let it not be said, Lord, that we rob Thee of Thine honour. Thine, O Lord, are wisdom, learning, and honour; all good is Thine, Thou art Lord of all, Thou art light, and I am in darkness. Thou art good, I am evil; if there be any good in me, from Thee have I received it by Thy grace and Thy mercy; and though I am very wicked, Thou art infinitely good. I rejoice, O Lord, that Thou art God, and if that which is impossible could be, that Augustine should reign supreme, I would only desire that God and not Augustine should be Lord of all."

These and many such things said this holy doctor, and his labours were not light, for in his time there were many heretics, Manichæans, Donatists, and Pelagians, and he opposed them both by the arguments which he held with them and by the books which he wrote against them, and particularly against Faustus, a most obstinate heretic. For this reason the heretics held him in such detestation that they preached publicly to those who followed their errors that it would be no sin to kill him, and that whoever did so would at the hour of his own death be carried to heaven, even though he were a sinner. They lay in wait for him several times, with the intention of killing him in certain paths, when he passed from one place to another, but Augustine by divine permission mistook the road and in this manner

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escaped the danger; and he afterwards thanked God that he had lost his way on such an occasion. If he was sometimes praised for what he had preached or written as being beautiful and well considered, he immediately answered: "I do not feel that God has punished me in any way except this, that deserving to row as a galley-slave, He has made me the head of a church to govern it, and I am the master and teacher of those whom I ought to stand to hear."

The dress and shoes of St. Augustine were neither of price, nor very mean, but all was suitable and modest. His food and drink were very temperate; and it displeased him greatly to hear at his table complaints of any one, particularly of the absent, so that he had these lines inscribed upon the wall,

> "Whoever seeks to devour by slander the life of the absent
> May know this table is forbidden to him."

It once happened that certain prelates, being at table with Augustine, began to murmur, and he said: "Either change your conversation or erase these lines; but unless you do one of these two things, I shall leave the table."

This saint took great care to provide for the necessities of the poor, and in times of great need he did not spare the jewels and ornaments of the church, but sold them and relieved the wants of the poor, and afterwards, when he could conveniently, repurchased them; and he said he had been taught to do so by St. Ambrose. Some persons, being near death, left him houses and other possessions for the church; but understanding that those same persons left children who were poor, he would not accept them, saying that those who desired to deprive their children of their inheritance to give it to the church, must find another bishop to receive it, and not Augustine, and perhaps it might please God they should not find one. He forbade there should be any women in his house, to avoid scandal, and after his baptism he always avoided being alone with any woman, neither would he consent to speak with one alone, except on affairs of the greatest importance.

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St. Augustine did not ask favours for others very willingly, but when he did so at their urgent request, his petitions had so much effect that those who conferred the favour appeared to do so of their own choice. He would never be a judge between his friends, though he would willingly be one between strangers; and he said his reason was that he should lose one of his friends, as he against whom he gave sentence would be displeased; but of those who did not know him he should gain a friend in him in whose favour the sentence should be pronounced.

He once sent two deacons to Jerusalem to find St. Jerome, that they might be taught by him; and when they returned they told him what they had learned, desiring to be disciples of St. Jerome. The two deacons prayed St. Jerome that he would write against Pelagius the heretic, against whom St. Augustine had already written, and he answered: "Who can write anything new on a subject which has been already treated by the angelic intellect of Augustine?"

He assisted his relatives that they should not be in great need, but not so much that they should become rich.

In the year of the Lord four hundred and thirty-three the Vandals were driven from Spain and passed into Africa, and having encamped about the city of Hippona, they kept it strictly besieged for the space of three months. The blessed father prayed God to grant him patience to support such a calamity — for the besieged suffered great want, which caused much sickness — or that He would set him free from this misery by removing him from the troubles of this life.

It pleased the Lord to grant this last request, and he was seized with an acute illness; and the saint, knowing that his end drew near, commanded that the penitential psalms should be written and so placed that he, while in bed, might be able to read them; and having been obeyed, he read them many times with tears and great devotion. That he might have time for thought, and to give himself mostly to God, and not to be hindered by a multitude of visits, ten days before his death he ordered that no one should enter his chamber except his physician and one who waited on him.

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The hour of his death being at hand, having received the holy sacrament, he yielded his soul to God, being at the age of seventy-seven years. He made no will, for this servant of Jesus Christ had nothing to leave except his books, which he left to his brethren. He was buried in the church of St. Stephen, which he built. He left his church and diocese full of priests and of convents of monks and nuns. He was present at seven councils which were held in Africa, and signed his name at them all. He wrote three hundred and thirty-two books, as may be read in the book of his temptations, besides many homilies, treatises, and letters.

The barbarians, after the death of the saint, pillaged the city, and paying no respect to the sacred places, the body of St. Augustine was transported to the island of Sardinia. Leopardo, king of the Lombards, afterwards bought this holy body from the Saracens, who had made themselves masters of that island, and took it to Padua, where it was honourably buried. Some saints have begun, but none have ever finished the praises of St. Augustine, so I will enlarge upon them no more. I will say only this, that he who in this life was so much the enemy of heretics is, now that he enjoys the glory of God, much more the friend of the Catholics.

The church celebrates his feast on the day of his glorious death, which was on the twenty-eighth of August, in the year of the Lord four hundred and thirty-three, he having been bishop forty years; and at that time Theodosius the Younger was emperor.

The life of Saint Stephen, first king of Hungary. Written by the Padre Jean Croiset.

TOWARDS the year of our Lord three hundred and seventy-two, the Huns, a people of ancient Sarmatia, having left their country under the conduct of the famous Attila, a million and nine hundred thousand of them came to inhabit Pannonia, to which they gave their name. After many revolutions the Huns returned for the fourth

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time, about the year nine hundred and seventy, and established there a kind of monarchy governed by dukes. Geysa was the fourth prince of his nation who reigned there at the end of the tenth century. He was a pagan, naturally severe towards his own people, but gentle and humane towards the strangers who came to his states attracted by his benevolence. As these were principally Christians, the purity of their lives and the conversation which he had with them gave him an exalted idea of the Christian religion. St. Adalbert, Bishop of Prague in Bohemia, being informed of this good disposition of the duke, came to preach the faith in Hungary. Geysa had no sooner heard him than he became the most illustrious convert of this apostolic man. St. Adalbert, having instructed him, baptized him, together with the duchess his wife, named Sarlot. Many of the lords of his court also embraced the faith, and the duke, who from the time of his baptism was entirely changed, became another man.

The prince, with the grace of conversion, received the gift of true piety, and with piety an ardent desire to destroy paganism in all Hungary. The zeal of the duchess was no less fervent, and while she was occupied in reflecting upon the means she should take to fulfil these devout wishes, she saw in a dream the martyr St. Stephen, who assured her that she should soon give birth to a son, who should be destined for the prosecution of the great work which she and her husband had so much at heart; and that this son should be not only the first king, but also the apostle of the Hungarian nation.

This happiness was soon accomplished by the birth of this promised son, who was given to the world in the year nine hundred and seventy-eight, to whom the name of Stephen was given in baptism. The duke and the duchess spared no pains to bring him up in the most holy customs of our religion, and in all the sentiments of Christianity. Neither did they neglect to provide for him the best masters to cultivate his mind with letters and science.

The young prince was born with so fair a disposition for

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virtue, with a heart so noble, so generous, and so upright, and with an intellect so brilliant and so docile, that his natural gifts left but little for education to do. He made, in a few years, prodigious advances in learning and goodness, and in his early youth became the most accomplished prince of his time.

He knew how to avail himself wonderfully of the teachings of St. Adalbert, who applied himself to forming his youthful heart. The books of the scriptures, in which he had lessons daily, were so much to his mind that he preferred them to all others. His assiduity in prayer took the place to him of all amusement, and the duties of religion were the employments of his youth. In all courts there was nothing spoken of but the virtues of the prince of Hungary, and his subjects, though pagans and naturally rough and barbarous, regarded him with admiration and loved him tenderly. His gentleness, his affability, his noble and gracious manners, united to an inexhaustible charity for the poor, gained him all hearts, and he became the admiration of the great and the idol of the poor. A wisdom so premature with a piety so uncommon induced his father to make him his associate in the government of the state at the age of fifteen years, and to lay on him the burden of the most weighty affairs. The duke his father and St. Adalbert both died in the year nine hundred and ninety-seven, and he was found capable, notwithstanding his youth, to govern his people himself. His first care was to establish a solid peace with his neighbours, that there might be nothing to disturb him in the design he had entertained from the first, to exclude paganism from his kingdom.

He begun by seeking to reform the customs and usages of his subjects, which were those of all barbarians. He assembled them in crowds in his palace, and instructed them himself like an apostle.

The numerous conversions which he made daily enraged the priests, who saw their authority and their gains constantly diminishing, and they induced the pagans who formed the greater part of the nation to rebel against the young

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prince. They had for their leader the Count di Legzard, who, finding himself sufficiently powerful to contest the sovereignty with the duke, raised a levy of numerous troops and went to lay siege to Vesprin, the principal city after Strigonia. The duke raised an army composed of Christians, but too small to be in a state to resist the prodigious body of the rebels. It would have been easy for the holy duke to have had peace by leaving the infidels to live without disturbance in their idolatry, but motives of religion prevailed over those of state.

Full of confidence, he implored the assistance of Him for whose glory he fought and under whose protection he had placed his kingdom; and though much inferior to them in numbers, he proceeded against the enemy, and a battle ensued which was obstinate and bloody. As the young duke was as valorous as holy, he did his part well; he was found everywhere, and everywhere the victory which was complete followed him. The pagan rebels were entirely defeated, the count their captain was killed, and the numerous crowd of his followers was cut to pieces. The holy duke gave all the glory of the triumph to the God of battles, for whom he had fought, and after having in all parts of his dominion returned solemn thanks to God, he built a magnificent monastery on the spot where the battle took place.

Freed from all obstacles, he now gave his attention to banishing the remains of idolatry from all his states, and assembled many religious men from all parts to preach the gospel; and as the prince was always at the head of these apostolic labours, their success was wonderful, and the conversion of the country universal. Seeing that all his states were Christian, he divided them into eleven dioceses, and chose Strigonia for the metropolitan see. After having made this distribution, he sent to Rome to have it approved by the holy see. A priest named Attricus, and Anastasius a Benedictine abbot, were the heads of the embassy, and were commissioned on the part of the duke to lay his homage at the feet of Pope Sylvester the Second and pray him to take this state of new Christians under the protection of the holy

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see, to deign to confirm what had been done in the cause of religion in Hungary, and to grant to him permission to assume the title and rank of king, in order to give greater weight to what he might do in future.

This embassy reached Rome at the same time with one from Boleslaus, Duke of Poland, who, together with his nation, had been converted thirty years before, and who also asked the same favours.

The ambassadors of Boleslaus had already been received in audience by His Holiness, who, wishing to recognize the great services performed by both himself and his father Micislaus for religion, had already ordered a crown of gold to be made, with the intention of sending it to the Duke of Poland; but having understood from Anastasius, in the audience he granted him, how much had been done for the faith by the Duke Stephen, he resolved to give him the preference. He granted him the title and rank of king, and sent him the crown, in addition to the gift of a rich cross, to be carried before him; he authorized by a bull the disposition he had made of the bishopric, and the bishops whom he had nominated, and recognized him as the apostle of the new kingdom. St. Stephen, having received the confirmation of his new royal dignity, assembled the clergy and nobles of the country at Strigonia, and received the royal unction from the hands of the prelates; and knowing well that all power comes from God, and that from Him he had received his kingdom, he made himself and all his successors feudatories of the holy see.

This so glorious beginning awakened jealousies. Some of the neighbouring princes saw his increasing greatness with envy and resolved to conquer the rising monarchy; and the Prince of Transylvania, though his cousin, entering armed into his territory and causing great desolation, the king proceeded against him at the head of the troops which he had collected, gave him battle, discomfited him, and took him prisoner; and as the price of his liberty asked only the conversion of himself and his people. The Bulgarians made war on him with a larger army, but with no better success;

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he conquered them and compelled them to sue for peace, which he granted without taking advantage of his victory. He contracted a close alliance with the Emperor Otto the Third, and married his sister Gisella, a princess of great piety, who appeared to be peculiarly destined for him by divine Providence. Never was a marriage so harmonious; the inclinations of the queen were never different from those of the king; they had the same zeal for religion, the same exercises of piety, the same devotion, the same liberality towards the poor and the church.

All being tranquil in the kingdom, the king devoted himself exclusively to making his subjects happy, to reforming abuses, and causing the Christian religion to flourish. Few were the provinces in his states, few the cities even in those provinces, in which this holy king did not found some monastery, build some church, or establish some hospital. Neither did he confine his royal and devout liberality to his own kingdom; he built and endowed churches and hospitals for the Hungarians in Rome, Jerusalem, and Constantinople. He applied himself entirely to causing the spread of religion in his states, to banishing vices and abuses, to making justice and goodness prevail, and to rendering his people happy. He made wise laws to abolish the barbarous customs of his subjects, and to prevent, by means of severity, theft, murder, blasphemy, and every form of dissoluteness and impiety; and in order that these regulations should be lasting, he collected a code of laws in which were written in fifty-five chapters all the most salutary edicts. Charity for the unfortunate being born, so to speak, with him, he took the widow and the orphan under his royal protection and provided for the subsistence of poor families with a liberality and a wisdom of which there are but few examples; and all this he accomplished with so much order and success that it was said that in his reign Hungary had no poor.

He spent the greater part of the day in the public business of religion, of the state, and of justice, which he himself administered to his people. Never was any prince more easy of access; the poorest were always listened to first, and

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it was commonly said that the Hungarians had a king who was more than a father to them. He assisted daily at the mass with a devotion, a modesty, and a respect which inspired all those who were present. The rest of the hours of the day were consecrated to good works; he said pleasantly that they were his chase, his games, and his amusements. The greater part of the night he devoted to meditation and prayer. But the night preceding his communion, which was frequent, was always a vigil. His austerities equalled his innocence and his fervour.

St. Stephen was too acceptable in the sight of God to be free from trial; he had enough of the most severe illness to put his eminent virtue to hard proofs. He was ill a long time, and suffered cruel pains for the space of three years, without his joy and tranquillity being ever seen to fail. Death, which had taken from him his children, had left him only his first-born, Emeric, a youth endowed with the most brilliant qualities of a great prince. Educated by a father who was his teacher, and who was also the best model he could have to imitate, he followed closely in his footsteps, and imitated well his virtue, adopting scrupulously all the holy maxims which the king had given him, and of which the saint had composed a book for his instruction. The Lord took this beloved child to himself in the flower of his youth. St. Stephen felt his loss bitterly, and could find no consolation in so severe an affliction except in his religion. It may be said that he never showed himself more a saint than in this distress.

The Bessi, a barbarous people, having invaded his country, were so much struck by the virtue of the holy king that they sent sixty of their principal men to ask his friendship; his piety alone had disarmed them; but they discovered still more when, after they had been spoiled by the vagabonds of the country, he caused all that had been taken from them to be restored, though he might have retained it as some compensation for the injury they had done his provinces.

The Emperor Otto, his brother-in-law, being dead, Conrad his successor entered Hungary with a powerful army,

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and it was necessary, in spite of his love for peace, that he should proceed against them. The horror which he had of seeing the blood of his subjects shed compelled him to appeal to God; and hardly had he terminated his prayer when the troops of Conrad retired in so much haste that their retreat might have been supposed a total rout; neither could it ever be discovered why he had been obliged to withdraw so formidable an army.

The holy king had been for many years almost entirely confined to his bed, by reason of his many infirmities, when some lords, discontented by the inexorable exactness with which he executed justice, resolved on the most enormous and execrable of crimes, which was to deprive him of life. One of them entered his chamber in the evening, holding a drawn sword under his cloak. The king, hearing a noise, asked who was there; his voice frightened the traitor to such a degree that, dropping the sword, he threw himself at his feet, confessed his crime, and begged for mercy. The king pardoned him, and with his pardon converted him. At last this holy prince, having had a revelation of his approaching death, prepared himself for it with a new fervour, which completed the perfection of his virtue; and after receiving the last sacraments, he tranquilly yielded his soul to his Creator on the day of the feast of the Assumption, on the fifteenth of August, in the year one thousand and thirty-eight, in the sixtieth year of his age and the forty-first of his reign.

The grief for his loss was universal, and all wept a king less than an apostle and a father. He was buried in splendour in the magnificent church of Our Lady of Alba Reale, built by himself. The tears of the poor were the most beautiful feature of his funeral. His heroic virtue induced the holy see to decree to him the honours due to saints, and Pope Innocent the Eleventh established his festival on the second day of September.

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The life of Saint Jerome, confessor and doctor of the church. Selected from his own writings and from those of learned authors.

ST. JEROME was born in the time of the Emperor Constantine, son of Constantine the Great, in a place on the confines of Dalmatia, or Pannonia, called Stridon; which place, as he himself relates, was in his lifetime almost entirely destroyed by the Goths, so that all trace of it is now lost. The father of St. Jerome was named Eusebius, and he had a brother called Paulinianus.

He had also a sister whose name, as well as that of his mother, is not now known. The brother and the sister both entered convents and closed their lives in sanctity. St. Jerome was of a noble family, and though there is no mention of this found in any of his own writings, it is nevertheless recorded by other authors.

He was very rich in this world's goods, and had many lands and other possessions, which he sold when he built the monastery of Bethlehem, as he says himself. As his father and mother were both Christians, he was from his childhood instructed in the things of the faith and of the Christian religion; and as the study of the liberal arts flourished at that time in Rome, he went there with the intention of studying them. He studied first Greek and Latin letters, and had Donatus for his preceptor in grammar; he then applied himself to philosophy and the other liberal sciences, and made much progress in these studies, as his writings bear witness. He received in Rome the vesture of Christ, as Pope Damasus writes; that is to say, that here he was baptized. It was the custom then to baptize persons who had attained a suitable age, and that they should wear a white vest for some days, and also a white cloth upon the head; and these are called the vesture of Christ.

St. Jerome, desiring to pursue other studies, left Rome

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and went to France, journeying here and there, seeking wise and learned men and good books; and where he found any of these, there he staid some time. When he found books which pleased him, he endeavoured either to buy them or to copy and translate them; and writing to Fiorenzo he says, that in the city of Treves he copied with his own hand a large volume, in which were written some treatises collected by St. Hilarius. When he found some man of holy life, he remained near him and learned from him all the good possible, and so he did when he found any one distinguished in learning and doctrine. In this manner St. Jerome made himself rich, not with the goods of fortune, but with those of virtue and science. After some time he returned to his country, and from there to Rome, where he thought himself at least in security; for it did not please him to remain in his country, because he had there many relatives from whom he could gain no good; neither could he satisfy them; but he afterwards thought that in Rome there were too many temptations to diversions and pleasures dangerous to the young, which he still was. He therefore took a resolution to cross the sea and go to Greece, with the intention of studying and conversing with the wise and learned men of that country, of whom there were many in those days.

Having intelligence that the Patriarch Gregory Nazianzen, called by distinction the theologian, was in Constantinople, he went to that city; and although he was capable of being a master and teacher himself, he desired to make himself a disciple of that not less holy than wise pontiff, of whom he boasts that he learned theology. He visited the Holy Land and went to all the holy places with much tenderness and comfort of soul; there remained nothing in all Palestine which he did not see with his own eyes, and particularly those places of which mention is made in the holy scriptures, saying that this was most useful to those who studied them. Here he had masters to teach him the Hebrew and Chaldean languages, which he understood well, though he did not speak them, when they were spoken by others. He also conversed with the people of Syria, and thus acquired their

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language; and though he was so much occupied in learning different languages, he did not diminish his studies in the Latin tongue, in which he took so much pleasure that, for the sake of reading Cicero and other eloquent and elegant authors, he spent much time that he might have occupied in more useful studies, before he had been punished for this by God. I wonder that any can be found who doubt this, since he himself relates it. St. Isidore records the same words, who indeed might have feared a similar punishment, since he also spent his time in such studies. St. Jerome, in the epistle to Eustachia which begins "Audi, filia," relates that he occupied himself with the writings of Tullius, pleasing himself much with his eloquence; and if he afterwards took in his hand some book of the prophets to read, it displeased him and the style appeared low and confused.

About the middle of Lent he was attacked by a violent fever, which reduced him to such a degree that those who were about him began to prepare those things which were needful for his burial. Being in this condition, he was rapt in a vision, and saw himself brought to judgment before the throne of Jesus Christ; and being asked of his faith and condition he replied freely that he was a Christian. The judge replied that he was rather a Ciceronian than a Christian, for where his treasure was, there was his heart also. He, hearing this, became mute, and the judge ordered that he should be punished; but he begged for pardon, and many angels who were present kneeled down before the judge and prayed that the sins of his youth might be forgiven and time granted him for amendment, with this condition — that not having reformed, he should be subjected to heavier punishment. He, finding himself in this condition, gladly promised everything, and confirmed the promise by an oath; and he was immediately set at liberty and came to himself. From this time St. Jerome devoted himself to the study of sacred letters, spending his days no longer in vain and profitless occupations; and he himself writes, in the prologue to the epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians: "It is now more than fifteen years since I have taken in my hand any book of

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secular science, and if it ever happens that I have need of any sentence from such books, I quote it from memory."

It now appeared to St. Jerome that it was time to settle himself, and to decide upon some mode of life. And seeing that in ecclesiastical studies there is great danger through the obligation they impose of being good, and also of appearing so, to set a worthy example to all; and seeing also the great danger of those who take wives, he decided at once against this state, and was afraid to undertake the first. So he took the resolution to become a monk, whose rule was at that time to assume a poor and abject dress, very different from that which ecclesiastics as well as secular people wear in these days; and though there were some differences of fashion, cloth, and colour — some wearing rough and coarse cloth, and others woven haircloth — in this they all agreed, that all their dress should be rough and poor. They exercised themselves in continual vigils, fasts, prayers, and studying the scriptures. They could hold no public office, and were all occupied in serving God. Some of them lived in common, and there was one superior over many of them, whom they all obeyed. Others led solitary lives in the deserts, and St. Jerome decided to follow this rule of life.

He had some friends to whom he gave an account of his soul and of the step which he intended to take; who, although they had followed him up to this time, enjoying much his holy conversation, receiving great profit from his salutary counsels, and taking an example from his good life, nevertheless at this point all left him, excepting one called Eliodorus, who took the monk's habit and remained some days with him in the desert; but afterwards, weary and disgusted with such a life, and not being able to endure its hardness, he also left him and returned to the world. St. Jerome writes to Julian the deacon of this departure of Eliodorus very graciously, saying: "Our brother Eliodorus came to the desert with me, but because he is so holy, and I am so great a sinner, he could not endure my company, and went away and left me." As soon as St. Jerome had adopted this mode

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of life, he arranged the affairs of his house and his goods, and placed them in the hands of one who would take good care of them.

While he was in the desert, he did not stay long in the same place, because in that time there were some heresies, and the prelates of Antioch, of Alexandria, of Cyprus, and of other places were in the habit of sending visitors to the solitary monks under their jurisdictions, to examine them in the doctrines they held. These visitors did not trust St. Jerome, and he did not trust them; he suspected them on account of some expressions and words they used in relation to the mystery of the Holy Trinity; and they suspected him because he showed that he was not pleased with their society. To free himself from this molestation, and to escape the frequent visits of some of his friends, who thus occupied more of his time than he desired, he withdrew into a solitary and horrid desert in the country of Syria; and here he shut himself up with his books in a cave, where he remained four years, practising the most severe penances, and leading an austere life. At the end of this time he thought it best to seek the society of others, but he did not abandon the desert entirely, but lived more in company with the other monks.

It was not fitting that so much light should remain longer concealed, but that it should be manifested, which happened thus: the monks, beginning to enjoy his holy and worthy conversation, discovered the great treasure which God kept, as if in safety, under that rough dress in the breast of Jerome — so much virtue, as well as wisdom and learning. He had before this written some books which had passed into the hands of many, leaving all those who read them well satisfied with them and with much esteem for their author; and thus he came to be known in many places.

Epiphanius was at that time Bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, and Paulinus of Antioch. These two prelates had some difference, and it was needful, in order to reconcile it, to lay it before the Roman pontiff; and they decided to go to Rome and to take St. Jerome in their company, having so good an opinion of him. And in this way he returned to

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Rome for the third time. Damasus was the high priest, who, knowing the value and excellence of Jerome, desired to keep him near him, and gave him the title to a church in Rome, which was the same position as it is now, that of a cardinal. He filled the place with the utmost diligence, and would not tolerate public sinners in his parish, reproving them severely, even though they were ecclesiastics. For this he came to be hated and persecuted; for those who led lives like beasts and were dishonest and disorderly in their actions, hated him because he punished them, and sought to find some opportunity to calumniate him and drive him from Rome; as they finally did. This holy man, knowing their calumnies and falsehoods, called to mind the peace and quiet which he had in the desert, the joy in the love of the Lord, and the leisure he had to write and study; all these things together made him come to the decision to leave Rome and return to Syria. He first visited those monks with whom he had lived, and would have remained with them; but importuned by many friends, he went to Bethlehem, where he built a monastery. To meet the expense of this monastery he sent orders to his country, as he himself says, writing to Pamachio, that all the things of his patrimony should be sold. When it was known that he had established himself in this country a great concourse of people flocked around him from every part, and particularly from Rome. Here St. Jerome finished writing his wonderful works, which are now the property of the church. He translated the Bible, the Old Testament from Hebrew, and the New from Greek, both into Latin; and wrote on the greater part of them, explaining them wonderfully. These his works being spread abroad through all the world, besides the numerous epistles which he continually wrote to different persons, caused his holiness and profound doctrine to make him known to all men as a good Catholic; which some had before doubted, on account of what his enemy Rufinus had written against him.

One of these was St. Augustine, who at first did not trust in him, but afterwards bore him so much love and reverence that when he was Bishop of Hippona he sent to him one of

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his best friends, called Alipius, with some other priests, that they might visit him in his name and learn from him; considering himself honoured, learned as he was, to become a disciple of the disciples of St. Jerome. Great people from all parts went to visit him, such as Paulus Orosius, who was also sent by St. Augustine, Sulpicius Severus, Apodemius, and other renowned and famous men; and though the journey was long and the discomforts and hardships great, all appeared nothing for the sake of seeing that venerable man so full of learning and wisdom.

This doctor wrote continually against the heretics, and always opposed them, so that they trembled at the sound of his name. Origen having written many books before St. Jerome, he read them all, taking the greatest satisfaction in the high and delicate intellect of that man; and he had so much affection for him that he called him his master; but for all that, he did not overlook the errors he found in him, but contradicted them whenever it was possible. St. Jerome was much subject to infirmities caused by his severe studies and the little care he took of himself, so that he was sometimes confined whole years to his bed; but he never on that account spared himself, for he dictated and composed while others wrote. In this manner he wrote many books, occupying himself in this employment for the space of thirty years, as he himself writes. Greece paid this glorious doctor much honour in translating his works from the Latin, in which he had written them, into Greek.

It is said that one day, as he was reading to his disciples, a lion came into the room where he was reading, and all the scholars ran away; but the holy doctor remained without any fear, and the lion, coming to him, held up one of his forepaws and showed him it was wounded by a thorn which had remained in it; and the saint cured it, and after the lion was well he would not go away, but remained in the monastery like a domestic animal.

It is also said that by the direction of Pope Damasus he arranged the service for the church, dividing the psalms into portions for every day in the week, and commanding that

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each one should be concluded with this verse, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, etc." He arranged besides the epistles and the gospels for all the year, with the lessons and prophets which are read in the church. St. Jerome occupied himself in these holy works and others of the same nature, such as answering letters and explaining away doubts which were sent to him by bishops and other religious persons from all Christian lands; and in giving counsel to those in need of it. He attained such perfection that he was often rapt in ecstasy and found himself among the choir of angels; and he began to enjoy in this life a portion of the reward of his labours.

There remained much suffering for him in his old age from an infirmity which weakened him to such a degree that he could not rise from his bed. As Sigisbert says, he had a rope tied to a beam over his bed, and he assisted himself by this when he desired to turn himself on one side. His illness increasing, and knowing that the hour of his death drew near, he commanded that the holy sacrament should be brought him; and having received it with the greatest devotion, he yielded his spirit to God on the thirtieth of September, about the year of Christ four hundred and twenty-two, Honorius and Theodosius the Younger being emperors. Mariano Vittorio, in his life of St. Jerome, says that it is not certain that this holy doctor died at the age of ninety-nine years, as some authors assert, because it is contradicted by others. This much is certain: he died full of years and infirmities, as St. Augustine says in the first book against Julian. His holy body was buried in Bethlehem, and afterwards, in course of time, was carried to Rome to the church of Santa Maria Maggiore.

The church holds him as one of its four doctors, and makes a great festival for him with much reason, and particularly at Rome, because here he studied, here he was baptized, and here his holy remains repose. It is but reasonable that France also should keep his feast, because he passed some time there, and visited the principal places of that kingdom. Germany has the same obligation, for he

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wrote a book on that country, and thus greatly ennobled it. Neither is Greece free from this debt, on account of the books which were translated into the Greek language by this holy doctor. Egypt is also his debtor, having enjoyed for some time his holy and most wise conversation; and not less so are the deserts of Syria, on account of the great penances he did there, by which he made them illustrious. Bethlehem must also be taken into account; indeed it may be called doubly happy — first and principally, because there was born our Saviour Jesus Christ to live in this world, and besides, though in a less degree, because there St. Jerome died to live in heaven. But above all other provinces and kingdoms, Spain is particularly indebted to this holy doctor, not only for the numerous epistles which he addressed to some of its people, but because some centuries after he had died in Bethlehem he seemed to come to life again in Spain, not in person, but in name, in our holy religion. In our time the Catholic King Philip the Second particularly favours the monastery and college which he has caused to be built in the Escurial, under the title of St. Lorenzo, according to the rule and institutes of the glorious St. Jerome; where in particular are preserved many celebrated relics of saints, many figures and images by famous painters and sculptors, many priceless books, many rich vestments, and other things for the celebration of divine service. The church celebrates the feast of St. Jerome on the day of his death, which was the thirtieth of September.

The life of Saint Martin, bishop and confessor. Written by Sulpicius Severus.

ST. MARTIN was a native of Sabaria, a place in Hungary, and born of noble parents, although they were Gentiles. His father had been a tribune of the cavalry in the Roman army, and had retired to repose in his own country. Martin, being ten years old, went to the church against his

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father's will and requested to be made a catechumen, which was to have his name written in the catalogue of those who desired to be Christians, and who were to be baptized after they were well instructed in the faith. From this time he occupied himself in the service of God, and attended to nothing but to please Him, remaining constantly in the church with His servants.

Here he learned letters and good customs, and the desire came to him to go into the desert to lead the life of a hermit; but he was prevented by his age, and by an edict which came from Rome in which it was commanded that the sons of old soldiers should give their names and go to the army to serve in person. For this reason his father, who was opposed to the holy desires of his son, sent him to the army at the age of fifteen years; and he served in it in the time of the Emperor Constantine, the son of Constantine the Great. He was usually in garrison in Padua, a city of Lombardy in Italy. The three years before his baptism he passed in the army, but always avoided those vices into which soldiers so often fall. He was affable, humane, and charitable; humble with his companions, and so sober and temperate that he appeared rather a monk than a soldier; and even before his baptism he left nothing undone that a good Christian should do. He took the pay which was given him, and desiring nothing more for himself than enough to support life, he gave the rest to the poor. These virtues gained for him the love and esteem of every one.

It once happened that he was entering into Amiens, which is in Gallic Belgium, and he saw a poor man almost naked, who asked charity of the passers-by; it was winter, and many had died in consequence of the severity of the cold. Martin was in armour, and had only a mantle called "chlamys," which was round like a cloak; and seeing that no one relieved the necessity of the poor man, he cut this in halves with his sword and gave one half to the beggar and kept the other for himself. This was seen by many who were present, and some laughed to see him with only half a cloak; others were ashamed to think they had never done such a

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thing in their lives, and especially as they might have clothed the poor man without depriving themselves.

That night Martin, being asleep, saw in a dream Jesus Christ, covered with the half of the cloak which he had given to the poor man, and He came near him and asked him if he knew that cloak; and he afterwards heard Jesus Christ speak to His angels and say to them: "Martin has clothed me with this mantle." Thus were proved the words which Christ spoke: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Martin did not become proud or haughty in consequence of this, but thanking Jesus Christ, he sought with all diligence to be baptized, and to leave the profession of a soldier; but being entreated and even importuned by his tribune, he waited until the time of his service had expired. He was baptized when he was eighteen years old, and remained a soldier two years more. He left this profession on occasion of the peace which ensued, which was accounted miraculous; for the army being on the point of gaining the day, peace was made with most favourable terms for the side on which Martin was; so that it may be supposed that the blessed Lord caused it to be made for the love of His saint, because he had been calumniated by his captain, who accused him of seeking to leave the army through cowardice and to avoid being in a battle; and in consequence Martin had offered to pass unarmed through the army of the enemy.

Thus the Lord, to deliver him from this peril, caused this peace so honourable for his side. St. Martin now went to St. Hilarius, Bishop of Poitiers, who ordained him an exorcist, and with whom he remained some days, enjoying his holy conversation and learning his wise precepts. But desiring to return to his own country, he took leave of St. Hilarius, not without many tears on both sides, who prayed him earnestly to return without delay.

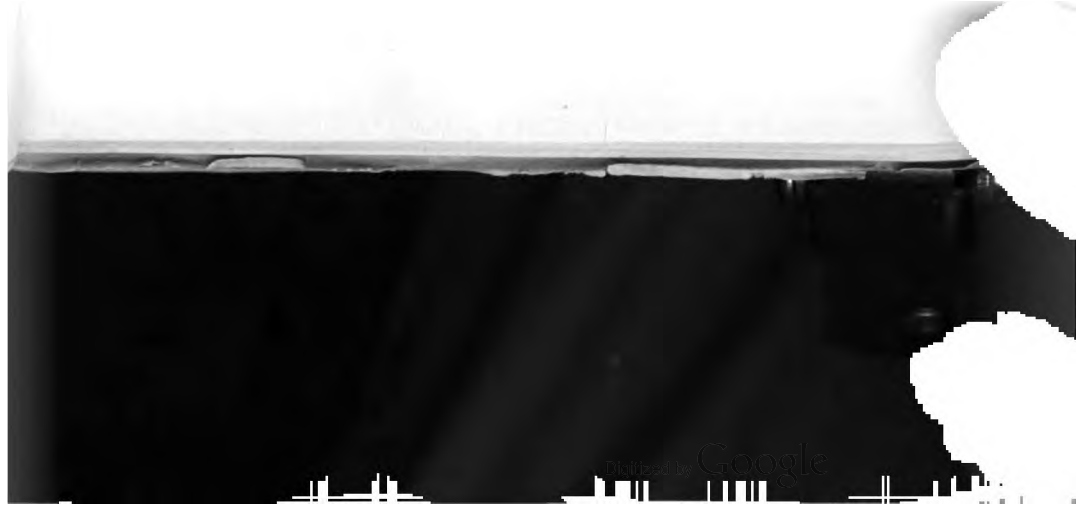
St. Martin, being on his journey, found himself in peril of death, for he fell into the hands of robbers who were about to kill him; and one of them had raised his sword to strike him, but another passed his under it and prevented the blow.

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St. Martin showed no fear, and being asked the reason, he replied: "I never felt less fear in my life, for I serve a Master who, I am certain, will never desert me in my need." St. Martin availed himself of this opportunity to preach Jesus Christ, and one of these assassins was converted and became a monk and died a saint. He reached his own country at last and preached the faith of Jesus Christ to his relatives, his father, and his mother. His mother was converted, but his father remained in the errors of idolatry; and many others became Christians through his preaching.

In these days there were many Arian heretics in that country where St. Martin preached, and as he alone contradicted them publicly, he was greatly persecuted by them and thrown into prison. He afterwards returned to France, but hearing that St. Hilarius had also been imprisoned by the Arians, he passed from that country into Italy and built a monastery near Milan, where some Catholics assembled and led a monastic life in his company.

But here also he was persecuted by a great Arian, named Auxentius, who treated him with so much insolence and violence that he determined to leave the place; and the saint, yielding to circumstances, crossed the sea and went to an island called Galinara, having with him a holy priest; and there they remained for some time, living upon roots and herbs. But having heard that St. Hilarius had returned to his bishopric, he resolved to join him, and having done so, was received with much love by the holy bishop. His fame spread far and wide, and the people of Tours sought to keep him among them, as he was their bishop; but it was a hard thing to persuade him to leave his monastery. They succeeded at last by means of a stratagem, which was, that a man who lived at a distance from the monastery, and whom he had assisted liberally, told him that his wife was very ill at Poitiers, and prayed him to go to visit her and to cure her. St. Martin left the monastery with this intention, and the ambassadors of the city of Tours carried him away by force before the monks were aware of it, who would have endeavoured to prevent it.


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St. Martin was welcomed in Tours with great joy, for all the people with one voice said they should be happy now they had so wise and holy a man for their father and pastor. After he was elected bishop, he changed his state only, but not his life, being still as humble and as plain in his dress as at first. He filled well the office which he had taken, being diligent in seeking the good of his subjects and averting from them all evil. He reproved vice and praised virtue, he punished and rewarded, and neglected nothing that it became him to do; so that he did all his duty to man, and, that he might not fall short of that which he owed to God, he built a monastery upon a rugged mountain two miles from the city, where some monks collected, and where he also had a cell to which he often retired for prayer and contemplation.

These monks, who in a short time reached the number of eighty, incited by the good example of St. Martin, lived lives of holiness, purity, poverty, and obedience, with much fasting and prayer, and wore robes made of camels' hair. Their food was temperate, they used wine only in sickness, and seldom left their cells. St. Martin had some of these monks always with him, and when he returned to Tours, after having been some days at the monastery, before he entered the city, if it was known to those possessed with devils, they showed great fear and distress; and the same thing happened in other cities which he visited. This holy prelate used great diligence in banishing idolatry from all his bishopric, and went to many places, destroying the temples of the idols, cutting down and burning the groves under which the demons gave oracles and answers; and in consequence he was often in danger of being killed by the people. But he bore himself in all cases so prudently, besides working some miracles in the presence of those who held themselves aggrieved, that sometimes the whole populace would kneel down before him and pray him to make them Christians. It would take long to recount how many sick he cured by prayer, and how many infidels were converted by his miracles. Some of the most wonderful of these having been wrought before he was a bishop, he would sometimes say to

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his friends and disciples, that he was better before than after he held that office, and that it had diminished his power. It is easy to be seen that the saint spoke thus only from humility, for it is well known that he did many works of greatness and sanctity that he had not done before he held this office.

He was a bishop when he was visited by Sulpicius, who wrote his life, and he received him gladly, thanking him for coming from Toulouse to Tours only to see him. The saint himself washed his feet and seated him at his own table, where he satisfied his soul rather than his body, hearing his words burning with holy fire and the power of his reasoning. This author says that he never found in any mortal man whom he saw or conversed with so much wisdom, so much power, and such an abundance of pure and delightful words as in Martin, and that it astonished him the more as he knew he was a man without learning. The subjects of his discourse were contempt of the world, the evil of sin, and love of goodness; and all that he recommended, he himself performed.

"There is not a tongue that could describe," says Sulpicius, "the excellence that I saw in this saint all the time that I remained with him. I never saw him angry or discontented, or laughing immoderately." The reason of this was that, whatever happened to him, he received all things as sent by God. The severity of his fasts and of his vigils, and his shirt of haircloth, were rather to be admired than imitated.

He slept always on the ground, and allowed himself so small a portion either of sleep or food that it was wonderful it could support life. He was never idle; when the affairs of the church allowed him time, he spent it in reading the divine scriptures, mingling his reading with prayer, like a blacksmith, who, to handle the iron he is working more easily, gives some empty blows upon the anvil; so St. Martin both prayed and read. O blessed man! in whom was never seen deceit or guile; who never judged or condemned any one, or returned evil for evil; who being a bishop and reproving offences against God, and punishing wrongs done to

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men, never reproved or punished any one for offences or wrongs done to himself. The blessed name of Jesus was ever on his lips; and in his heart compassion, peace, and mercy; and he induced all to follow after these virtues.

He would often say some pleasant words, from which might be drawn spiritual profit for the soul; as once, seeing a sheep shorn, he said: "This little animal has fulfilled the precept of the scriptures, for having two coats, he has given one to him who had none, and we should do likewise." It was not long before the saint did so, for once, as he was preparing to celebrate mass, a poor man almost without clothing asked charity of him, and the holy bishop ordered his archdeacon to buy a garment for the poor man; but the archdeacon, who always had orders to give many alms, delayed to give this, and indeed sought to avoid doing so, so that the poor man went into the sacristy where St. Martin was and told him that what he had ordered had not been given him; and the saint took off his own robe and gave it to the beggar. The archdeacon, afterwards coming in to say the people were waiting to hear mass, the saint replied that he could not go until something had been given to the beggar to wear. The archdeacon replied: "The beggar is not here; he has gone with God's blessing;" and St. Martin said: "Bring the garment, and there will not be wanting a poor man to wear it."

The archdeacon went out half angry and bought a poor and cheap garment and threw it down before the saint, who took it and put it on and then went to say mass; but when he lifted up the holy sacrament, as the garment which had been given him had short sleeves, his arms were uncovered, but as the sleeves of the sacerdotal robe were large, none of those in the church saw the angels, who covered his arms with resplendent plates of gold. It is said that in memory of this, the custom was adopted of placing on the sleeves some ornaments of silk or brocade, or of something of more value than the alb itself. But this was not a universal custom, being ordered in some particular churches, and not in the Roman church of the high pontiff.

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The devil once reproved St. Martin, telling him that he admitted persons who had been the greatest of sinners to repentance; and among others, some who had denied the faith, whom he said God did not pardon. When St. Martin heard this, he cried out in a loud voice and said: "If you, miserable creature, repent of your sins and do suitable penance for them, the mercy of God is such and so great that I will obtain forgiveness for you."

The saint being once invited by the emperor to dine, who seated him at his own table, he took with him a holy priest, and there were also present many of the principal lords of the court. The emperor ordered that they should take his own cup to the saint, thinking that when he had drunk from it he would return it to him; but St. Martin instead of doing so gave it to the priest who was near him, giving it to be understood that he was more worthy of honour than the emperor, by reason of his priestly dignity; and he was commended for doing what would have been regarded as an affront if done by any other person at the table.

The Emperor Valentinian, the second of the name, did not bear himself so towards this saint; for the empress, being of the sect of the Arians and little friendly towards him, persuaded the emperor to do him no honour, and he determined to do as she desired. And the holy bishop going to make him a visit, entered where the emperor was, who remained seated. The saint drew near him, but the emperor did not move or make any sign of good manners; but as it pleased God, his chair took fire and burnt rapidly, and Valentinian, feeling the fire which had already burnt him as well as his dress, rose to his feet in spite of himself. And knowing in his heart why this had happened, he advanced towards St. Martin and made him many reverences, and before he had spoken a single word, the emperor determined to grant him everything he had come to ask.

This good shepherd made many visits in his bishopric, and once arrived at a city where, it being in the winter time, they prepared him a chamber in the sacristy of the church; here they made him a bed and kindled a fire. The saint lay down

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to sleep; but as he was accustomed to sleep only on the ground, the bed appeared to him an annoyance, and wishing to remove the covering, he threw it by accident near the fire, without perceiving it, and then went to sleep; and the covering beginning to burn, set fire to the apartment. The flame had already reached the roof before St. Martin awoke; he ran hastily to the door, but in his confusion he could not open it. All the priests and monks were without in great distress, not knowing what to do. At last the holy prelate took the resolution to recur to his usual remedy for all dangers, and kneeling down to pray, he was soon liberated and the fire extinguished. This good prelate bore great respect to the church, in which he was never seen to seat himself.

At last, being aged and weary of combat, not only with the servants of the devil but with the devil himself, who many times appeared to him and with menaces and deceits threatened to injure him, the time of his death drew near. This being revealed to him, and finding himself in a place in his bishopric called Candaccnse, he assembled his disciples and told them that the hour of his departure was at hand. On hearing this, all said to him in great affliction and distress: "Dearest father, why dost thou leave us? To whose care shall we commend ourselves? Ravenous wolves will attack thy flock, and without a pastor they will have no hope of escape. We know well thy desire to be with Jesus Christ, but we also know that thy reward is secure in heaven, and though it may be somewhat delayed it will not be diminished. Have pity upon us, and desert us not." St. Martin, hearing these words and moved to great compassion, raised his eyes to heaven, and with many tears said: "Lord, if thy people have need of me, I refuse not the fatigue. Thy will be done." This glorious father did not know how to make a choice between love and hope; it grieved him to leave his disciples, and also to delay enjoying the presence of God, to whom he referred all things. O truly valiant man! victorious over labours and even death, fearing not to die, but refusing not to live.

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The fever increasing, and his disciples seeing that his end approached, and that he had thrown himself on the sackcloth and ashes which made his usual bed, prayed him that in this last hour at least he would consent to have some comforts; and he replied: "My son, it is not fitting that any Christian should die except upon sackcloth and ashes; but it is much more incumbent upon me, who am your master and prelate, and called upon to give you a good example." They begged him to turn his head a little at least, and not keep always looking up with so much difficulty; but he replied: "Let me look at heaven, and not earth, for my spirit will soon have to go that road." His last moment being come, the saint, seeing the devil, the enemy of the human race, said to him: "What doest thou here, cruel beast? Thou wilt find nothing in me for which I deserve perdition;" and so saying, he rendered his soul to the Lord, being at the age of eighty-one years.

This blessed soul was carried to heaven, accompanied by many choirs of angels, who made great rejoicings and sang sweetly. This music was heard by many persons who were in far distant places, among others by Sederino, Archbishop of Cologne and St. Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan.

Martin lived on earth poor and humble, but he entered into heaven rich and with great majesty. His death was on the eleventh of November, and the church celebrates his feast on the same day, and it was in the year of the Lord three hundred and ninety-nine, in the reign of the Emperor Honorius.

In his life he was the occasion of the conversion of many souls to God by his good example and his excellent teachings. May it please God of His goodness and mercy, that we may be of the number of the elect, that in company with this saint we may enjoy his glory. Amen. Many authors wrote of St. Martin besides Sulpicius Severus, such as St. Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, the priest Fortunatus, Gregory of Tours, Odone, first Abbot of Cluny, Eberno, Bishop of Tours, and many others.


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The life of Saint Francis Xavier, of the company of Jesus, canonized with Saint Ignatius, founder of that order.

THE glorious father, St. Francis Xavier, was born in the year fourteen hundred and ninety-seven, in the town called Xavier, belonging to his ancestors, situated not far from Pampalona in the kingdom of Navarre. His father, named Jasso, was president of the royal council of the same kingdom of Navarre, and lord of the town of Jasso from which his family took their name; his mother was Donna Maria Azpilcueta e Xaviera.

He did not want in his youth for good masters and teachers, for being the last born of a numerous family, he was tenderly loved by his parents, as he was also a child of uncommon parts. Having learnt his first studies in a short time, it was decided to send him to Paris. Here he finished the course of philosophy so soon, and with so much distinction, that he was selected to lecture on it in public; and he succeeded so well in teaching that he showed himself not less skilful as a master than he had been apt as a scholar.

His father, being persuaded by his family, thought of recalling him, but his sister, who was then abbess of the holy monastery of barefoot Franciscans at Candia, heard of her father's design; and being inspired by God, whose true servant she was, wrote to him, desiring him on no account to hinder Francis in the career he had commenced, because, thus led by the blessed hand of God, He had destined him to be His great servant and an elect vessel to bear His holy name to the most remote part of the earth. The father, after this prohibition, went no farther, and left Francis in Paris, where he devoted himself to the study of theology and to finishing completely the course of the grave sciences; in which time, though far removed from any low and worldly diversions, he lived rather without vice than with virtue; indulging in honourable plans of worldly greatness, thinking how he might increase the honour of his family, as much as

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his ancestors had done, by means of letters, and as all his brothers were doing by the splendour of their deeds of arms.

By good fortune he met a young Savoyard, of poor birth but of honourable conduct, called Peter le Favre, who was afterwards the first son of the holy father Ignatius, and the second foundation stone of the company of Jesus. With him he allied himself in a close friendship, they being mutually attracted by the similarity of their correct lives and the hatred of every vice which reigned in both; only there was one difference — that Peter, while with all his heart he attended on the lectures, had his principal object in the attainment of perfection, to which point Francis had not yet arrived.

The holy father, Ignatius Loyola, was at that time in Paris, occupied in the same studies; who, having been chosen by God as the head and founder of religion, already began to observe who among the number of young men were the most suitable for the service of His Divine Majesty. He fixed his eyes upon this couple, Peter and Francis, and seeing in them tokens of that celestial nature with which the blessed Lord had endowed both of them for the help of a great portion of the world, he sought their company, and was without difficulty received by them as a third companion, and was admitted not only to their friendship and most intimate familiarity, but into the same apartment of their lodging house.

Ignatius, losing no time, availed himself of every opportunity that offered to discourse on the vanity of all that the world seeks and values; often repeating to them that most profound sentence of the Son of God: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" By these and similar words, first said cautiously, as they were from time to time suggested, and afterwards more freely, as his confidence increased, it was not long before he entirely gained Peter.

But Francis at first showed himself opposed and reluctant, because the hope of earthly greatness had already taken firm root in his heart; and it was a difficult undertaking to per-

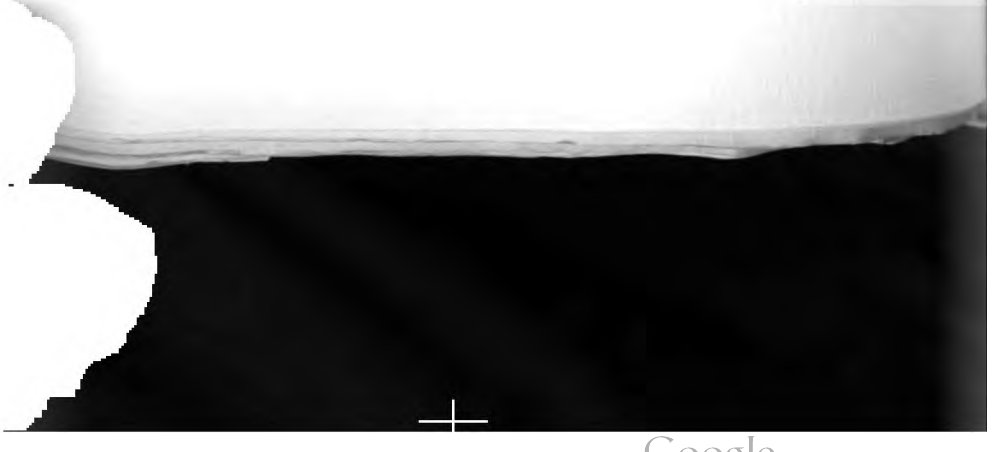
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suade him to change from the state of a good life, or at least not a bad one, to one supreme and perfect. Ignatius, however, as an expert hunter of the Lord, did not lose heart, but followed him always without losing sight of him, being assisted by Peter le Favre, whom he had already entirely gained to God. And working with internal inspiration and the celestial light of divine grace, he at last induced Francis to yield himself to Christ, and guided him to a safe harbour before he had made shipwreck of his innocence.

They were afterwards joined by some other companions, and were in all ten in number, who were the foundation stones upon which our Lord, by means of His servant Ignatius, founded the company of Jesus; who made the beginning of this new order with discipline, prayers, fastings, and vigils; thus dedicating the first-fruits of his converts.

They, with some other companions, took vows to God, in the year of the Lord fifteen hundred and thirty-four, of perpetual poverty, in the church of our Lady of the mountain of martyrs near Paris; to which now they added another vow — to pass together into Palestine, and having there adored the earth trodden by our Lord, to employ themselves in the salvation of the Turks; and to embrace as a signal blessing every opportunity that offered of dying for Christ. If for any reason they were prevented from doing this, they vowed to offer themselves altogether to the high pontiff, that he might make use of their labours in the service of their neighbour and of the holy Catholic church.

With this resolution they left Paris in the year of the Lord fifteen hundred and thirty-six, and crossed into Italy in the heart of winter, clothed in poor garments, and provided with no means of living except hope in God, each one having his copy of the scriptures. Three of them who were priests celebrated mass every day, and three others took the communion; and they lived on what was given them, asking charity in God's name, which was but little when divided among so many; and they crossed the Alps when the ground was covered with ice and snow, so that their very aspect suggested only scarcity and sterility. They reached Venice



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at last, where they found Ignatius expecting them, and disposed themselves to remain there some time, till the severity of the winter was past; dividing among themselves the principal quarters of that great city in order to devote their time to the service of their neighbours, and occupy themselves profitably in works which should mortify in them all feeling of pride or sense of pleasure.

The hospital of the incurables fell to the share of Francis, in the service of which he employed all his time, neglecting no service however vile belonging to the care of the sick. He was assiduous in cleaning the rooms, making the beds, lifting and moving the sick, feeding them, washing them, bandaging their wounds, consoling them by day, and tending them by night with so much zeal and joyful fervour that crowds came to see so novel a sight, to their great wonder and edification. Such were the first-fruits of Francis's spiritual life, such the first assaults in the war undertaken against our common enemies — the world, the flesh, and the devil — begun by him, as by many other saints, by the mortification of the body; afflicting it by the watchings, fastings, haircloth, and discipline, by sleeping ill, dressing worse, living on alms, serving every one, esteeming themselves least of all, conquering self-esteem by the meanest services of the hospitals, subduing the love of even reasonable comfort and ease by the strictest voluntary poverty, and mortifying all taste and feeling by the care of the loathsome wounds of the poor.

Endowed with such signal grace, he left Venice in company with the other nine, under the care of Ignatius, and went to Rome, where they presented themselves before the high pontiff Paul the Third, and were graciously received by him, often discussing among those at his table questions of theology and philosophy. This wise prince not only granted his approbation of their vow of pilgrimage to the Holy Land, but also gave them money to pay the numerous taxes and passports which they were obliged to pay in different places on the journey. Having again received his blessing, they returned to Venice to take their departure for the Holy Land; but they found all hope of speedy embarkation

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destroyed by the war which broke out in those days between the republic of Venice and the Ottoman emperor. Not to fail of keeping their vow, they made arrangements to stay in Venice and the neighbouring cities until the time should come for its fulfilment.

At this time Francis took all the holy orders in this most noble city and afterwards, in company with Alfonso Salmero, a most holy man and one of the first ten companions of Ignatius, he retired to a hermitage not far from Padua, where they remained for forty days in extreme want of all things; and he prepared to celebrate with devotion his first mass, which he did in Vicenza, assisted by all the company of Ignatius, assembled there by him for that purpose, with much fervour and many tears on his part as well as that of all those around him. After this beginning Francis was transferred to Bologna, where he gave a rare example of holiness in his usual manner, by serving in the hospitals, teaching children, preaching in the squares, and attracting to himself the eyes and hearts of all men, and especially of Don Girolamo Casalini, an honourable canon of San Petronio, and rector of the church of Santa Lucia; who, charmed by so much goodness, invited him to transfer his quarters from the hospital to his own house, which invitation Francis would not accept, for like the great Francis of Assisi, he had taken the resolution to live on that food which he begged for the love of God.

As the war continued between the Turks and the Venetians, the fathers found there was no hope of obtaining a passage to Palestine, and they decided to return to the holy pastor at Rome, to fulfil the other part of the vow they had taken; offering to him, without exception of time or place, all their talents and powers for the service of their neighbour and the holy church. And taking once more the road to Rome, they were received by the high pontiff with his first benignity, and consigned to his vicar, who distributed them through the principal churches of Rome, that they might give instruction in Christian doctrine by preaching and confessing, and employ themselves in all the duties usually performed by

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this company, making use of the talents bestowed upon them by God for this purpose.

In this division San Lorenzo in Damaso fell to the share of Francis and Peter le Favre, and at this time there was great scarcity of provisions in Rome, so there was as much need of distributing bread for the sustenance of the body as of preaching the word of God for the salvation of the soul. In both of these duties the fathers engaged, and Francis principally, with his usual diligence. It was soon known throughout the greater part of Europe what great services the company of Ignatius did the souls of the faithful in the city of Rome; and the fame of them reaching Portugal, coming to the knowledge of the most serene King John the Third, he immediately perceived the suitableness of such men to the wants of the East Indies, and of all those vast countries which by valour of arms and industry the Portuguese were every day discovering. And he wrote to Don Pietro Mascaregnas, his ambassador at Rome, that if he desired to please and serve him, he should obtain from his holiness the largest number possible of this company to be sent to the Indies to sow the good seed.

The ambassador, having received this order and laid it before the pontiff, was by him referred to Ignatius, with the request that he would comply with the prayer of a lord so great and religious. The ambassador, having come to Ignatius, obtained from him two only of his company, and asking for more, he received from him this answer: "If of the ten which are all, more than two should be sent to India, what would remain for the rest of the world?" For this purpose two were nominated by Ignatius, Simeone Rodriquez and Nicolò Bobadilla; but the latter falling ill about the time for leaving Rome, Ignatius changed their destinies and substituted Francis, who having taken the resolution to leave Rome and go to India, took no more time to make ready for so long a journey than a few hours to embrace his brethren, take leave of his devoted friends, mend his poor robe, and receive the blessing of his holiness; which things being accomplished, with no baggage but his simple breviary, he

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commenced the journey, in company with the ambassador Mascaregnas, the next day after he had taken a resolution of so much importance.

The ambassador Mascaregnas travelled by land towards Lisbon, having Francis with him; and it was not long before he and all his suite were so much delighted and edified by his rare example and most sweet conversation that they all began to revere and honour him as the guardian angel of their journey. He was always the last to take repose, the first to rise; ready on all occasions with his services, even to the very muleteers, aiding them in their meanest offices to give them time to rest. The ambassador, with much courtesy, had so planned the route that all the company would have to pass not far from Pampalona, where lived the mother and brothers of Francis, and thus afford him an opportunity of saluting them and taking leave of them, giving and receiving their last adieus before parting to meet no more in this world. Having come near the place, they expected that Francis would take advantage of the occasion, which had been obtained for this purpose with some hindrance of the journey. But Francis, to teach all that when the service of God is concerned one must tread under foot all that may cause delay, coolness, or disturbance, denied himself this last office of piety towards his mother, in order to keep warm and fervent his piety towards God. It cannot be described how much Mascaregnas, and all those with him who judged rightly, were edified.

After this the ambassador, writing to the king, expatiated so much on the praises of Francis that long before he arrived in Lisbon his name and fame were well known; so that not only expected but desired, he arrived at last in this great city. After having done reverence to the king, and received from him a reception suitable to the idea he had formed of him, it was not long before all Lisbon saw with their eyes and revered in person what they had hitherto known only by the relation of others. Because as his custom was, he with his companion Rodriquez, took a chamber in the common hospital, devoting themselves to those duties which they had practised in Rome, Venice, Bologna, and Vicenza; so that

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in a short time, such was their reputation for sanctity through all Lisbon, the people began to call them apostles.

Much time did not pass before all the court and the king himself, seeing the great fruits of the labours of Francis and his companion, laid aside almost entirely the thought of the mission to the Indies; esteeming it small prudence to provide for others in time of scarcity that which was more needed at home; and it went so far that the king, John the Third, wrote to the pontiff Paul asking his permission to retain them — for as Paul had canonically approved the company of Ignatius and enriched it as a new and favoured plant of grace, he placed the affair in his hands; and he, writing to Portugal to that great king, who so well deserved the favour of his holy church and of his company in particular, counselled him to retain the father Rodriquez in Portugal, and to permit Francis to go where he was summoned by so many signs from heaven.

This decision having reached Portugal, with his usual promptness Francis took leave of the king and received from him the pontifical brief constituting him apostolic nuncio for all the Indies, with full powers; and he embarked immediately, taking with him nothing but the apostolical brief and the name of apostle, and leaving it, as we have said, as a legacy to those of the company who came to Portugal after him. When the saint found himself in Lanciano, a little island, from whence he intended to transfer himself to China when the way should be opened, he begged the Portuguese who were there to build a church, which all crowding to do, it was erected in two days; and every day while he remained in health he celebrated mass, devoting the rest of his time to those works of piety which were his employment and to preaching, confessing, and asking charity for himself, but much more for others, and particularly for poor girls; to such edification of all, that the Chinese, who had come there to trade with the Europeans, were by him and his life greatly astonished and delighted.

The hope of reaching China seemed remote, the best and richest of the Portuguese ships having gone, and one only

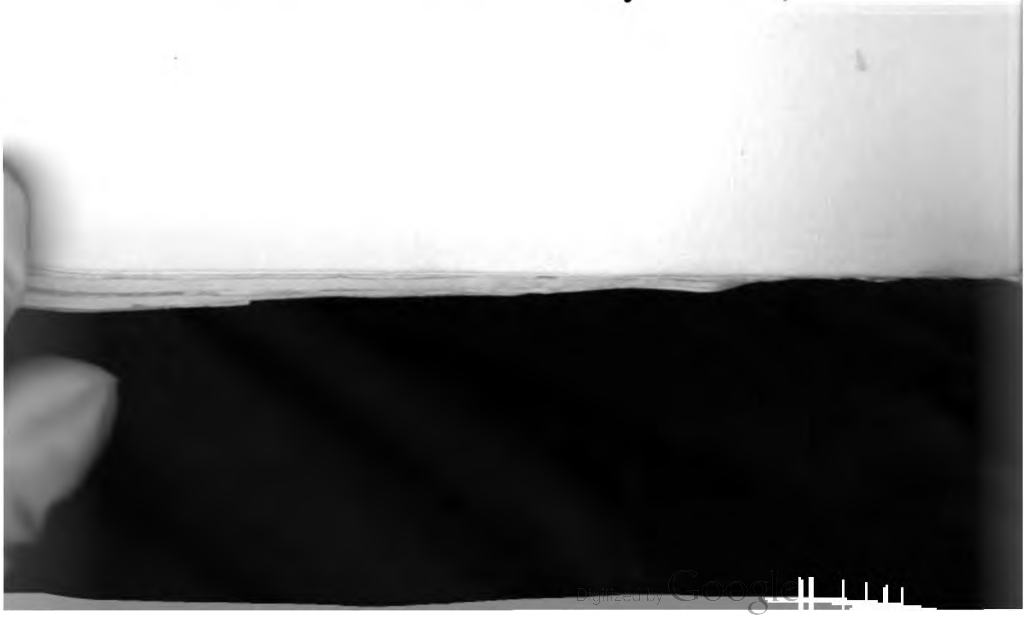
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remained, filled with the sick and in want of everything. There was little hope that Francis would have any opportunity except by this ship, which, as I have said, was in great need of every preparation for the long voyage, as well as for the wants of the sick who were on board.

Francis thought little of this difficulty, taking gladly any way to China so he might there preach Christ; and he agreed for his passage to a Chinese port, together with his food while on board the ship, for two hundred scudi. While on the voyage, in the year fifteen hundred and fifty-four, on the twentieth of November, Monday, after having said mass, he was attacked by a mortal fever, to which giving way, he was laid on a bed on board the ship. But through the severity of his malady, not being able to endure the motion of the vessel, which prevented him from fixing his thoughts on God with the quiet which he desired, he made them land him, with two of his young companions, on the shore; where, finding no other shelter, he lay down in a cabin of leaves which had been yielded to him through compassion, the greater part of the inhabitants being ill affected to those few passengers who were landed from the ship, not caring to provide for them or take care of them on account of the sickness on board the ship, and the difficulty they had to provide for their own households.

The saint's malady increased rapidly after he had been laid in the cabin, it being open on all sides and exposed to the air. He was twice bled in his great agony by some one who rarely or perhaps never bled any one before, and God knows with what instrument.

He had no consolation from his companions, for the two young men who were with him were obliged to go to seek what was needful both for him and themselves with great difficulty. The only attention he received in his illness was from one who brought him a few almonds, which he was not able to eat; so that shortly his malady became desperate, with delirium, loss of speech, and frequent convulsions; and when he returned to his right mind, he commended himself to God and Christ with the humility of a sinner, the faith of


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a saint, and the gladness of a citizen of heaven. His illness lasted until Saturday the second of December, when, with a crucifix in his hands which he held upon his heart, calling with a broken voice on Jesus and Maria, and repeating: "Jesus, Thou son of David, have mercy upon me," Francis Xavier, in a cabin, on a wretched mat, half covered with poor clothes, without any companion to console him, far from all earthly comfort, and in want of everything needful, died.

And this was his death, instead of the martyrdom he so earnestly desired; and it was granted him by God as a first reward of the labours undertaken by him to bear into so many countries His holy name. The fame of this saint was soon spread throughout all India. Bishops, prelates, and others preached his praises to the people, exposing his likeness in public and wearing it around their necks. Every one was anxious to have some relic of him, and if nothing else could be had, to obtain some dust from his grave. The heathen — which is a rare thing — commended themselves to him, made vows to him, and pilgrimages to the churches or places which contained his likeness. The King of Travancore, having heard the fame of the miracles wrought at the church bearing the name of the saint, gave it a rich endowment; and once when the infidels made an incursion into those parts, and through hatred to the Christians set fire to twelve churches, when they reached that which contained the image of St. Xavier, they not only left it untouched, but commended themselves to the saint and did him reverence.

These wonders being known in Portugal, the famous king, John the Third, wrote a letter to this effect to his viceroy of the Indies, Don Francesco Baretto: that he desired to have a full account of his life and miracles, that he might demand of Rome his canonization. And he commanded that no pains or expense should be spared, and that full accounts of the life, death, and miracles of the saint should be forwarded to him. In consequence of this letter the viceroy consulted with the Archbishop of Goa, and they ordered that they should take information, as is done in law suits; all of which was approved and received as authentic by the

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Roman rota; and as the fame of the saint constantly increased, when all the formalities had been attended to canonically, which an affair of such importance demanded, His Holiness Gregory the Fifteenth at last took steps to canonize him. And to add to the honour of this saint and shorten the time of separation between the father and his son, he canonized a holy disciple with a holy master, as with universal applause was done on the twelfth of March, the day dedicated to the holy pontiff Gregory the Great. And Alexander the Seventh, placing Francis in the Roman breviary, ordered that his feast should be observed on the third of December.

The life of Saint Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan, doctor of the church and confessor. Selected from the writings of Paulinus the priest, of Simeon Metaphrastes, of Paul the deacon, from the tripartite history, from Nicephorus Callistus, and from his own writings.

ST. AMBROSE was the son of a noble Roman, who was also called Ambrose, and who being in office in France with the title of prefect, had this son. The child lying one day in his cradle, there flew in unexpectedly a swarm of bees, many of whom flew in and out of his mouth; and the nurse being about to drive them away, the father forbade it because he wondered at this sight and waited to see what would happen. The bees at last took flight and were lost to sight high in the air, and the father, full of wonder, said: "God will make something great of this child if he lives." Thus was indicated his great eloquence and wonderful learning.

It chanced that his father died, and he was brought to Rome by his mother, in company with his sister, who had taken the vows of virginity. Ambrose, seeing that his sister kissed the hands of the bishops and priests who came to the

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house, one day extended his hand to her in jest, and said to her: "Kiss my hand also, for I too shall be a priest and a bishop." The lady reproved him, though she excused him as he was but a child; but it appeared in the end that he spoke the truth.

Having attained years of discretion, he devoted himself to various studies, in which he showed the acuteness of his intellect, for he became famous in rhetoric and other sciences. It pleased him once to employ himself in the office of advocate, and he displayed so much eloquence in the cause which he defended that an illustrious man called Probus, who had the charge of the government of Rome, made him his counsellor and granted him an honourable office in that city; in which he conducted himself so well that the Emperor Valentinian made him governor of Milan and of Genoa, cities subject to the empire.

It was remarkable that when Probus gave him this charge in the name of the emperor he said to him: "Ambrose, take this post which Valentinian has given thee, and exercise it not as a judge, but as a bishop." Probus intended to say that he should fulfil his duties, not with too much rigour, but with the mildness of a pastor and a prelate; and his words were not in vain, for Ambrose filled his place with so much prudence and discretion that every one was well satisfied with his government, and he was loved and esteemed by all.

While Ambrose was in Milan, Auxentius, the archbishop of that city, died, who was an Arian heretic; and on account of the election of the new pontiff there was a great commotion among the people, the Catholics desiring a Catholic bishop and the heretics one who was an Arian; and Ambrose, as pertained to his office, went to still the uproar.

He addressed himself to them all in common, saying that a prelate should not be chosen with cries and uproar, but regard must be paid to the personal qualities and the condition of one who was to be elected to such a dignity. While Ambrose was saying these things there was heard the voice of a child, saying: "Ambrose archbishop."

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The people hearing this voice, as if it had been divine, became still, and each one, heretic as well as Catholic, obeyed it; but Ambrose, who did not desire the charge, fled from the place and returned to his apartment. And to move the people from this opinion and incite them against himself, he began to execute justice with extreme rigour, contrary to his custom and against his nature; in order to lose his credit and escape being elected to the imperial dignity. But notwithstanding this, as he was known to be most upright, and also because his purpose was recognized, they became more earnest that he should be their prelate, each one crying with a loud voice: "Thy sins be on our heads."

Ambrose, seeing his efforts vain, tried another course, which was to leave the city secretly and go to Padua; but though he walked all night, the morning found him close to the wall of Milan. When the people saw him, they took him forcibly to his chamber and set a guard over him, that he might not escape, and sent to the Emperor Valentinian, praying him of his good pleasure to confirm the election of Ambrose. The emperor listened to the embassy well content, being gratified that the judges whom he sent to govern his people were such that they merited to be elected bishops; and he confirmed the election, giving orders that it should be carried into effect.

While this diligence was used, Ambrose again fled from the city and concealed himself on the estate of a friend of his, called Leontius, who was a man of great authority in Milan. When the ambassadors returned with the emperor's resolution, not finding Ambrose, great penalties were publicly proclaimed by heralds to any one who knew where he was and did not reveal it; so that Leontius, to avoid the penalty, made known where he was. The people hastened to the villa, and he was conducted to Milan; and as it appeared to Ambrose that such was the will of God, he accepted the election.

Ambrose being now only a catechumen, and it being requisite he should be baptized, he requested that a Catholic mon-

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astery should be selected, which request was the first cause of his losing favour with the Arians. After his baptism he passed from rank to rank, according to the order of the church, and was consecrated bishop on the eighth day, which was the seventh of December; and on the same day he assumed the pontifical seat and took possession of his dignity.

The life of this saint was most exemplary; he was very abstinent, and fasted every day except Saturday and Sunday; and when the feast of some martyr was celebrated, he often watched and passed the greater part of the night in prayer. He also reserved for prayer some hours of the day, and always desired to be present at the divine service in his church; and in this he was very devout and exact, adding and taking away many things, so that at last he ordered a particular service for his church. He composed many hymns, antiphonal and responsorial, some of which are used until now by all the Catholic church. While they were celebrating divine service, he required that all the clergy should be devout and attentive; and that it might be performed with more decorum and majesty he allowed no secular person in the place appointed to the priests; without any regard to his station.

Thus, once observing that the Emperor Theodosius had placed himself among the priests, he said to him that he must depart, that that was not his place, as the purple did not make a priest. The emperor obeyed without any reply; indeed he was pleased by the zeal and Christian liberty of Ambrose, for once being in Constantinople, and the patriarch inviting him to a seat in the choir among the choristers, he replied to him that that was not his place, and that of all whom he had seen Ambrose alone deserved the title of bishop for his great zeal for the honour of God, he having driven him from the place to which the other had invited him; and with these words, he commended Ambrose and reproved the patriarch.

Besides the things already mentioned, this saint occupied himself continually in composing and writing those works of which the church still makes use, and the greater part he

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wrote with his own hand; and this was his continual employment until the day of his death. He usually preached to the people, and always persecuted the Arians, of whom he was a great enemy. He restored many to the faith, from which they had fallen away; and many he converted, one of whom was the great Augustine, who by means of his sermons and private conversations left the sect and error into which he had fallen, though it cannot be said of him that he was a heretic, because he was not baptized. St. Ambrose himself baptized him, and also many others; and, as Paulinus says, the labour alone of baptizing so many people was sufficient to keep five bishops employed, as was seen after his death. He was besides prompt and diligent in aiding the poor, as well as prisoners and others who were in need. The gold and silver which he received as his patrimony, which was a great sum, and which he had in his possession when he was elected bishop, he spent, part in ornaments for his church and the rest for the poor, his mother being dead at that time. All the rest of his possessions he gave to his church with the condition that his sister should enjoy the income of them while she lived. He preserved nothing for himself, that poor and destitute he might the better serve the poor and destitute of Jesus Christ.

This saint was of a noble disposition; he rejoiced with those that rejoiced and wept with those that wept. When any one confessed to him some great and enormous sin, he wept so bitterly that he made the penitent weep with him, however hardened he might be; and when he knew some crime of any one, whether by confession or otherwise, he used all diligence to bring him to reformation, and this he did secretly; and many times he gained his desire by means of prayer, as well as of his loving correction. When he heard that some priest had died whom he had known to be a man of good and studious life, he felt great sorrow and ceased not to mourn for him; and if he was asked the reason, he answered that one reason was, that it was so rare to find one who worthily filled the office of a priest, and another, because he had died before him. Such was his life, and yet

there were not wanting those who persecuted him, because the Emperor Valentinian died, and the Empress Justina, who was secretly an Arian though she had concealed it while her husband lived, after his death began to show her hatred; and as Valentinian, her son, who remained Emperor of Rome, was still a child, this evil woman began to persecute the Catholics, and particularly St. Ambrose as one of the principal among them.

A bishop was once to be elected in the city of Sirmium, and the Catholics desired to elect a person of good life called Annemio, and for this purpose St. Ambrose was invited; he went, and the election was made. But as the Empress Justina was also present, she made every effort in her power to cause the bishop to be consecrated, not by St. Ambrose but by an Arian bishop. The people were assembled in the church for this purpose, and the saint was in his seat on one side, and on the other was the empress with many matrons and ladies and the rest of her court. The empress complained much to these ladies, saying it displeased her that Ambrose should perform this service; and one of them, more presumptuous than the rest, thinking to gratify the empress, rose and went to the seat of the saint, to lead him as if by force to the place where the empress was seated, with the intention that he should be attacked and ill treated and driven from the church. The pious pontiff, removing himself from that rash lady, said to her with much patience: "Though I am unworthy of this place and this office, nevertheless it is not permitted and does not become thee to remove me from it, or to interfere with me, or to put thy hand upon a priest; look to it that some punishment from heaven does not overtake thee." So he said, and so it was; for the following day that miserable lady died, and the holy prelate honoured her by accompanying her remains to the tomb. The empress and the other Arians, seeing what had happened, were at a loss what to do, so that St. Ambrose consecrated the Catholic bishop without any hindrance.

The holy doctor went to Rome, and Marcus Marullus relates that he was visiting in the house of a rich man, who declared that in all his life nothing had ever happened to him to cause

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him any regret. St. Ambrose called his priests in haste and said to them: "Let us depart from this place, lest some great misfortune befall us, with a man so happy." And going out from the house, they saw the earth open and swallow it up, with all that it contained. In Rome he visited his sister and the ladies, her companions. She was now advanced in life, and she was the same who laughed when the saint, being yet a child, gave her his hand that she might kiss it, saying that he should be a bishop; and the saint remembered this when she kneeled down before him and begged permission to kiss his hand.

After this St. Ambrose returned to Milan, where he was much persecuted by the Empress Justina, who by importunities, gifts, and threats, laboured to bring to her opinion the principal of the clergy and of the laity, that all being opposed to the saint, he might be thrown into prison. The matter went so far that a certain Eutimius, a rich and powerful man but very perverse and malignant, had prepared a car, or carriage, in which he intended to have St. Ambrose placed by either fraud or force and carried to prison. Thus had this bad man arranged things; but it pleased God that they should happen otherwise, for as Haman had made a gallows for Mordecai and was hanged thereon himself, so Eutimius was carried to prison in the very car which he had prepared for the saint. Another obstinate heretic, who was the leader of the sect, was converted to the true faith; and being asked the cause of his sudden change, he confessed that he had seen an angel who, while St. Ambrose preached, spoke in his ear, teaching him what to preach and declare.

In these days St. Ambrose did a notable act and set a rare example by his conduct towards the Emperor Theodosius, on account of his cruelty committed in Thessalonica. This was, at that time, the principal city of Macedonia, inhabited by Christians. It was the custom throughout Greece to have some games in which horses ran races either free or in cars, each one endeavouring to gain the prize which was given to the conqueror; and as they were occasions of much enjoyment, those who knew well how to guide the horses and cars

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were much esteemed; and the time for these games having arrived, one who was very celebrated for these things, and a great favourite with the people, was thrown into prison by Buterius the governor. The emperor having gone in person to Thessalonica to be present at the games, the populace, thinking that the feast would be nothing without this man, who was in prison, petitioned the governor, in the public name, that he would be pleased to liberate him; but he replied with arrogance and insolence. The people, feeling themselves aggrieved, rose in tumult, and rushing to arms in fury, killed him and some others of the emperor's court; it often happening that the good subjection and obedience of vassals is changed into rage and uproar when they are refused some trifling request, urgently preferred, as the people prayed for the liberation of that prisoner.

This offended the emperor very gravely and justly, but as he had some prelates in his company, and according to some writers St. Ambrose himself, who prayed him to pardon the multitude, he promised to forgive them, but afterwards, instigated by some of his court, who often inflame the minds of princes when they should rather soothe them, he changed his resolution and determined to punish the people beyond all law or order of justice. The people being occupied in the festival of that day, the emperor's soldiers assaulted them and killed all they met, great and small, old and young, innocent and guilty, citizens and strangers, without regard to age or sex; so that seven thousand lives were destroyed, though it is said the emperor had commanded that not more than two thousand should be killed. The wretched city was bathed in blood, and all the Roman empire was full of the tidings of so great cruelty.

The first time after this that the emperor went to Milan, St. Ambrose, who was much displeased by this cruelty and offence against God, desired at least to save the soul of the emperor; but thinking that some great scandal might arise, he judged it best to dissimulate for a time, and neither to see him nor speak to him. And for this reason, when the emperor drew near Milan the saint left the city. His prudence

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on this occasion was an example to all other prelates of the course they should hold towards great princes; and though the soul of St. Ambrose was moved by the desire of a good shepherd to save that lost sheep, nevertheless, considering that the emperor was not of his flock and diocese, he took the resolution above mentioned and left the place, thus restraining himself and checking the ardour to which his Christianity incited him. The emperor, having entered Milan and not finding St. Ambrose, showed himself ill-content.

The saint wrote him a letter in which he at first addressed him in mild and courteous language, but afterwards said plainly that he had gone away to avoid speaking to him, because in saying that which became him he must pass the limits of moderation; and if he remained silent and did not reprove him, he should be known for a man who passed over evil deeds; and neither would he succeed in bringing him to repentance. In the rest of the letter he brought to his remembrance his cruelty at Thessalonica, and exhorted him to penitence, giving him many admonitions, recounting many examples, and at last declaring plainly that he should not celebrate the mass in his church if he sought to be present; and that he said these things by the particular revelation and order of God. He concluded the letter in these words: "My Lord, if you believe me, bear yourself as I have counselled you, and if you do not believe me, pardon me what I have done in leaving the city, because in this I have shown myself to hold God of more account than yourself."

After writing this letter he thought that reading it might bring the emperor in some degree to repentance, and therefore he returned to Milan; but he would not visit the emperor, holding him as excommunicated. The more the saint avoided the presence of the emperor the more he sought his society. Things being in this state, it happened one day that St. Ambrose, being prepared to say mass in his church, was told that the emperor was about to enter it. The good pontiff went to meet him without the door, and in the midst of all his proud company took hold of his purple robe, and with the same freedom with which he had before written to

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him, said: "Stay, my Lord, for a man stained with so much cruelty, and bathed with the blood of so many innocent persons, is not permitted to enter into the house consecrated to God, unless he first make due penitence. It appears to me that thou dost not know what a grave sin thou hast committed, and though the heat of anger which hurried thee on has passed away, thou hast not yet turned to consider by the light of reason what a great crime thou hast committed. I fear that the royal power and imperial majesty prevent thy seeing and knowing thy great error, but nevertheless, cast down thine eyes and consider that thou art a mortal man. Look well to it that the royal robe that covers thee does not prevent thy seeing thine own heart and the frailty of the flesh, of which thou art formed like all other men. If thou beholdest how great is thy weakness, regard also the greatness of God, who is the Lord of all; fear Him since thou art His subject; ask His pardon since thou hast offended Him; and until thou hast done this, dare not to enter His holy house or appear in His divine presence, else thou wilt double thy sin and provoke more greatly His anger against thee. This I say to thee on His part, and thus I command thee, placing thee under the law by which the church separates from itself all those who do not satisfy it by due repentance." The emperor listened to the saint attentively, considering the course he had pursued in withholding and reproving him, and taking the right view, he judged that he had borne himself like a good prelate; and he returned to his palace, thoughtful and melancholy, like one who begins to feel the remorse caused by the recollection of sin when its horror represents itself to the already penitent soul. Theodosius remained some months without entering the church, and secretly wept and lamented his sin.

The festival of Christmas was at hand, and the captain-general, called Ruffinus, seeing his lord so ill at ease, asked the reason of his discontent. The emperor sighed deeply, and then with tears said to him: "Ruffinus, the cause of my grief is this: I see myself a vile and sinful man. Even slaves enter freely into the holy temple of God, and when they

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desire to go, find the door open; to me alone the entrance is forbidden, for me the door of the church is closed, and even that of heaven, so much more important; you all go to celebrate Christmas in the church, and I, wretched man that I am, cannot enter, and I continually lament my fate." Ruffinus, having ascertained the cause of the emperor's melancholy, said to him: "My Lord, if it please thee I will speak with Ambrose, and beg him to permit thee to enter the church, for the sorrow thou hast felt and the tears thou hast shed are sufficient penitence for the sin for which he reproves thee." Theodosius replied: "Thy words will be of no avail, for I well know the constancy of Ambrose in religious matters; he is not a man, where the honour of the Lord is concerned, to allow himself to be moved by the majesty and greatness of the emperor." Notwithstanding this, Ruffinus undertook the negotiation and began to treat with St. Ambrose, but he found him so constant, so ready on all points, and so prepared to die in defence of the authority of the church, that he immediately sent to desire the emperor to delay; for trusting to the opinion of Ruffinus, he was already on his way to the church.

When Theodosius received the message he did not delay, but passed on, saying: "I will go to the church and there the bishop may say to me what I deserve." St. Ambrose awaited him without the church, and the emperor approached and implored him to grant him absolution, alleging the example of David, who had sinned, and, notwithstanding, the Lord forgave him. St. Ambrose said to him: "If thou dost consider David who sinned, remember also that he wept and repented of his sin." The emperor replied: "I also have wept much." St. Ambrose answered: "That does not suffice; since thou hast committed a public crime, it calls for a public penitence." The emperor asked: "Will that be enough?" and St. Ambrose replied: "One thing more I desire, which will be a security against thine anger and revenge in time to come, which is this — that thou shalt make a law that when thou or any other emperor shalt order that any criminal shall be put to death, thirty days shall pass before the sen-

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tence shall be put into execution." Theodosius was satisfied to do what the bishop required, and did penitence with much sorrow and humility, and also made the law, which law still remains in the code of Justinian; and having done this, he entered the church. I have told this affair somewhat at length, not only for the part the saint took, but also because Theodosius was a Spaniard, so that the Spanish nation may know that if a man so worthy of being emperor fell into sin, he accepted with humility the correction and penitence imposed upon him by a bishop.

There also happened to this saint something remarkable in relation to Stilicho, the governor of Milan, who was appointed by the emperor. The case was this. There was a public festival in which they hunted animals in one of the squares, and the governor thought it a good opportunity to seize a certain Crescovius, who had fled for sanctuary to the church, and punish him for some crime he had committed; and sending his officers, they entered the church and arrested him, taking him forcibly from the altar where he had sought refuge. St. Ambrose saw it without being able to prevent it, having but a few priests with him, but he knelt down and began to weep bitterly for the violence done to the church. The officers took him away, and having placed him in prison, returned to see the games, where they found Stilicho, and gave him an account of what they had done. They had not quite finished when a leopard leaped upon them, and before help could reach them they were torn to pieces, to the great terror of the governor, who instantly ordered that the prisoners should be set at liberty and returned to the church, and that satisfaction be made for the violence done.

Many other wonders God wrought by the hands of this glorious saint, who by his prayers healed many sick, delivered many possessed by devils, converted many to the faith, and saved many souls. His fame spread through all the earth, and crowds came from far distant countries to Milan to behold him, and among others a queen of the Marcomani, who was an idolater. Hearing the wonders told of him, and desiring to be a Christian, she went to visit him, and enquire

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of him what she must believe and what she should do. The saint converted her and gave her suitable instruction, and in particular ordered that she should induce her husband to keep peace with the Romans; and she returned to her country well content.

It was now revealed to St. Ambrose that the end of his life drew near, and he had said some time before that about the time of Easter he should die. He fell sick, and when he took to his bed, Stilicho the governor of Milan said that the death of that man threatened the ruin and destruction of all Italy; and he sent for the great men of the city and told them to go to St. Ambrose and exhort him to pray God that He would prolong his life for the great need they all had of him. The citizens went to find him and executed the office imposed on them, and he replied: "I have not so lived among you that I need be ashamed to live, and I have not so served the Lord that I need fear to die, and I refer myself entirely to His will."

He was already near his departure, and two deacons, who were in the same chamber although not near him, spoke in a low voice of who would be bishop after him; and one of them said that Simplicianus ought to be his successor, for he was a man of superior qualities, and abbot of a monastery, and one for whom St. Augustine had an intimate friendship.

While they were speaking, St. Ambrose raised his voice and said: "He is a very good man, but he is old." The deacons were astonished, perceiving that the saint had overheard them; and after his death, in consequence of their relating his words, Simplicianus was elected bishop. At length, just as his last moment drew near, the revered bishop of Vercellæ, who was in another room, heard a voice calling him three times, and saying to him: "Hasten, there is yet time." Hearing these words, he went to the saint and administered to him the holy sacrament. He received it with the greatest devotion, and then, crossing his arms in the form of a cross, he began to pray, and while he prayed he yielded his soul to God, on the fourth day of April, about the year of the Lord four hundred, Valentinian and Theodosius being

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emperors. The Catholic church celebrates his feast on the seventh of December, which was the day on which he was consecrated bishop, and it was so ordained because the day of his death was in Holy or Easter Week. His body was buried in his own church in the city of Milan. God wrought many miracles by means of this saint after his death, as he had also done many while in this mortal life. Let us all pray God that like him we may be found worthy of eternal life.

Of the birth of Jesus Christ.

MOST joyful was the nativity of our Redeemer Jesus Christ; even those in the heavens came down to the earth to do Him honour and reverence. Oh holy souls! lovers of Christ, lay aside to-day all considerations and affairs of this world, and having collected your thoughts, behold the reconciler of heaven and earth; not crowned with the crown which the Father gave Him in the beginning, when He communicated to Him the glory of His divinity, but with that with which His mother crowned Him when she gave Him birth and clothed Him with our humanity. Come and behold the Son of God, not in the bosom of the Father, but in the arms of the mother; not surrounded by choirs of angels, but by humble animals; not seated on the right hand of the Majesty of the heavens, but laid in a manger of oxen; not speaking from the skies in thunder and lightning, but in tears, and trembling with cold in a stable. This is the day of the hidden gladness of His heart, when weeping outwardly as a child, He rejoiced in heart for our salvation as our true Redeemer.

The story of how Our Saviour was born was written by St. Luke in this manner. The time that the Virgin should give birth to her child being at hand, and notwithstanding this she being obliged to make this journey in company with her husband St. Joseph, it was but natural that she suffered much discomfort, the journey being long, and they poor and

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ill provided for it. The Virgin was very delicate, and the season unfavourable for a journey, and they were subjected to the cold winds, rain, and snow that prevailed, and their lodging was ill convenient, owing to the multitude of people who were journeying for the same reason as themselves.

But if they experienced suffering by the way, they found but little solace when, having reached the end of their journey, they arrived at Bethlehem. They were not able to find any place for repose because every house was crowded, so they were obliged to retire to the stable whose door or entrance was on the outside of the wall, although the room in which they were was within the city. In this poor room, on the twenty-fifth of the month of December, in the stillest time of the night, the mother of God brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped Him in poor swaddling-clothes, and laid Him in a manger between two animals, as is taught by the tradition of the holy church.

Here let us consider the extreme poverty and humility which the King of Heaven chose in this world on the day of His birth — a poor house, a poor bed, a poor mother, everything poor, and moreover very poor, because, as St. Bernard says, everything was borrowed from the animals. St. Cyprian, considering this, wonders and says: "O mystery worthy of greatest veneration, not to be told but to be felt, to be expressed, not with words but with silence and wonder. What can be more wonderful than to see that Lord, who is praised by the stars of the morning, who sits between the cherubim, who flies upon the wings of the wind, who sustains with three fingers all the weight of the earth, whose royal seat is the heaven and the earth His footstool, who has chosen to descend to such an extreme of poverty that at His birth His mother was forced to lay Him in a manger, not having any other place for Him. Where can we see united two so great extremes as God and a stable, God and a manger? How is it possible that man should not be amazed beholding his Maker trembling with cold, wrapped in poor raiment? O King of Glory, mirror of innocence, why shouldst Thou have such mercy, why shouldst Thou have

shed tears, suffered cold, been almost without clothing, paid tribute, and borne the punishment of our sins? O charity! O compassion! O immense mercy of our God!"

When we have contemplated the Son in this condition, let us turn our thoughts to the mother, and let us see with how much gladness, with how much devotion, and with how many tears she adored her Son, when she had brought Him forth and laid Him in the manger. Here there were no tapestries, canopies, or other similar adornments; but even if there had been, no one would even have looked at them, because the presence of the Child kept them occupied, and would not permit their eyes to wander elsewhere; while a great multitude of angels, who had descended from heaven and were present at these profound mysteries, sang songs of gladness. They sang joyfully of the new-born King, and rejoiced with the Virgin who was the mother of such a Son. Afterwards, not satisfied with this, they sought to tell this good news to whoever wished to hear it, and with these glad tidings they conducted some shepherds, who were near, to adore the new-born Son laid in the manger.

At the same time many great events happened in diverse parts of the world. In Rome, as is related by Paulus Orosius, a fountain of pure oil sprung up, so abundant that it flowed even to the Tiber, to the great wonder of all the city. The next day, as Eutropius says, there was seen in the sun a ring resplendent and clear as the sun itself. Octavius Augustus reigned at that time in Rome, and on that very day there was offered to him the title of absolute Lord of all the earth, and he refused it. Among other temples in Rome was one dedicated to the goddess of Peace, and, as is stated by many authors, while it was being built an oracle was asked: "How long time will it endure?" And the answer was: "Until a Virgin shall bring forth a son." And the Romans, holding such a thing to be impossible, placed over the door this inscription: "The Temple which will stand forever;" and this temple, as scholastic history recounts, fell in ruins the night when Jesus Christ was born. The same night was seen in Spain a cloud so beautiful and splendid that the night became

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clear as the noonday. The Christian, considering these and other events which occurred at the same time when Christ was born, must take occasion to thank Almighty God for the grace and mercy vouchsafed to him in these days, and much more so, seeing that the angels so devoutly and in such crowds praise and thank the Lord because He came to redeem the world and redeemed it, they themselves not being among the number of the redeemed.

If they then thank Him for the benefits and mercies bestowed upon others, what must those do on whom this gift is bestowed? To me it seems but fitting they should render infinite thanks, praises, and blessings.

The feast of the Nativity is celebrated on the twenty-fifth day of December.

The feast of the nativity of Jesus Christ, Son of God and our Lord. Written by the evangelist Saint Luke, together with some considerations upon this solemnity by Alfonso Vigliegas.

THERE was published a law and decree through all the world by the Emperor Cæsar Augustus, called Octavius, by which it was commanded that all subjects of the empire should go to the chief city of the province which they inhabited and there inscribe their names and pay certain moneys, acknowledging themselves vassals of the Roman Empire by paying it this tribute. Octavius was curious to know the number of subjects he had under his government, he being lord of almost all the world, which was all at peace, which peace lasted for six years before and six years after the birth of Christ.

This decree was published in Nazareth where St. Joseph dwelt with his blessed spouse, Mary the mother of God; and as Joseph was of the house and family of David, it was needful for him to go to have his name inscribed, and to pay the tax in Bethlehem, with all others of the same lineage. But

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the Virgin was not obliged to go as the decree included men only, but nevertheless he desired to take her with him. The Lord having given this sacred treasure into his keeping, it did not appear to him well to trust it to another person, neither did he wish to deprive himself of such a blessing as being present at the birth of the Son of God, when he might both adore the Son and serve the mother.

All this happened by the divine ordinance that thus Jesus Christ might be born in Bethlehem, and the prophecies be fulfilled. But if we consider well, we shall see that the birth of Jesus Christ our Redeemer in Bethlehem was not because the prophets having so declared, it was fitting that thus their prophecies should be fulfilled, but that they thus spoke because the Lord had determined to be born there.

What was then the motive of the Lord in selecting for his birth a place so poor and mean? He himself says by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah: "My ways are not your ways, nor my thoughts your thoughts." Men desire esteem and honour, and for this purpose seek all that may procure them, and avoid all that may prevent them; and to be born poor and of plebeian blood is not reputed honourable, and so they avoid it; but to be born of noble blood and of a rich house pleases all men, and every one desires it. But the Lord did the contrary. He came to manifest His glory to the world, and when He was to be born He chose for this purpose neither glorious Rome nor royal Jerusalem; it pleased Him to be born not in a house for men, but in a stable for beasts. And His birth being so much honoured on the part of angels, and His death so much dishonoured by the company of thieves, he concealed the honour in the stable at Bethlehem and published the shame in the city of Jerusalem; thus giving a wonderful example of humility. O happy Bethlehem! O fortunate stable! which pleased the Lord of Heaven rather than the superb capitol of Rome or the rich palaces of Jerusalem.

Thus the Lord chose Bethlehem to give us an example of humility, and therefore the prophets wrote, and having written thus, it was suitable that their prophecies should be fulfilled.

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Joseph therefore went to Bethlehem and took with him the most holy Virgin. It cannot be told how much that blessed lady suffered, it being midwinter, when she encountered snow, ice, winds, and tempests; and if men suffer being in their houses, how much more must a tender and delicate lady suffer on a journey in such a season, and being but ill-provided for it, for she and her husband Joseph were poor. But if they endured much hardships on the road, they found but little refreshment when they arrived in Bethlehem, for the apartments were all occupied by those who had come for the same purpose. Joseph went to find a chamber and was answered that they were full and that he must seek one elsewhere; and he went to another inn and they made him the same answer, so that the good old man and the holy Virgin, seeing that they should find no place where they might lodge, retired under a portico where there was a stable. It may well be believed that both shed many tears, seeing themselves in such calamity and misery.

The good Joseph had two animals with him, as according to the translation of the seventy-two interpreters, the prophet Habakkuk says: "The Lord will appear between two animals," and as the holy church itself sings in a responsorial chant on this solemnity in the morning service. And from this has arisen the custom that in painting the nativity of our Lord, they paint an ox and an ass. Joseph took the ox to sell him, and thus pay the tax, as well as their expenses by the way; and the ass was for the journey.

It was the night following the day of Saturday the twenty-fifth of December, as Pietro Comestore, called the master of history, proves by computation of that year; and as it was midnight, all creatures forgot their labours and fatigues and were enjoying quiet and repose. The moon shone with new rays, and the sun might well envy her because he was absent and she present, assisting that mystery by her light. The stars which travel in the path of heaven desired to stop to see this great and new wonder. Those which had passed on desired to turn back, and those which remained behind sought to hasten their journey to be present at that happy and won-

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derful hour; all created things and nature herself stood amazed and astonished.

The auspicious hour being come, the holy Virgin raised her hands and eyes to heaven and said: "Behold, Eternal Father, the hour has arrived that Thine only-begotten Son is born, and this precious Treasure is given to the world that is to pay its debt to Thee. I offer to Thee this fruit of life, this precious pledge which I have faithfully guarded." The holy Virgin, saying these or similar words, kneeled down before the Son of God, shedding tears of joy and tenderness, adoring Him and thanking Him that He was made man, and had chosen her to be His mother. Then she took Him in her arms and said to Him: "Alas, my child! how can I shelter Thee, with what can I cover Thee to defend Thee from the cold which is Thy first suffering? When Thou didst determine to make Thyself man, why didst Thou choose so poor a mother? Were there not in the world ladies and queens who might have covered Thee better than I can, with robes of silk and gold as Thou shouldst be covered, being who Thou art? I can but cover Thee with mean and poor garments, but since it pleased Thee to select a poor mother, why wast Thou born in a place so wretched? If Thou hadst been born in Nazareth, I could have served Thee better in my poor house; what can I do, my Son? Thou knowest how much I suffer, seeing this Thy divine face, on which the angels and all the court of heaven desire to look, ready to weep with cold? Alas, my Son, how is the pleasure I feel in seeing myself Thy mother mingled with pain that I cannot serve Thee as I desire, and as Thou deservest and needest! I pray Thee therefore, my lovely Son, that being pleased to select me as Thy mother, Thou wilt supply such things as I need, in order that my desire, which is seen by Thee, may be manifested, and that nothing may be wanting which is meet for Thy service."

Thus we may believe the Virgin spoke, either with external words or in her inmost heart. Afterwards, adoring again the Child as her God, and kissing His face as her Son, she wrapped Him in such clothes as she had, for though the evangelist has not written as I have, it may well be believed that the holy

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Virgin had made provision according to her ability, and had not been negligent in such a case. Having then wrapped Him up, she placed Him in the manger on a little straw, as the evangelist says in these words: "She brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling-clothes, and laid Him in the manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

And though when the Son of God was born no human being was present except the blessed Virgin and St. Joseph — and indeed some affirm that he had gone to seek food for himself and his holy spouse — there were not wanting thousands of angels, who descended from heaven, clothed in the livery of their King, in human form; and who began to rejoice with music and wonderful gladness, singing with sweet and delightful voices, truly angelical. It was meet that those blessed spirits should accommodate themselves to the custom of the world, where, when the sun rises in the morning, the birds sing sweetly as if saluting Him and rejoicing at His coming; so when the Sun of Righteousness was born into the world, it was the duty of the birds of heaven, who are the angels, to make music, singing melodiously. Some authors say that the song of the angels was begun by the glorious Virgin, and from this was taken the custom that in the mass the priest who celebrates it intones the Gloria, and the choir responds. Thus the blessed Virgin, having laid her son in the manger and again adored Him, began to say with a loud voice: "Glory to God in the highest." And the angels immediately answered: "And on earth peace, good-will to men," with the rest that follows. And this song which was sung in this stable was also sung by the angels equally wherever they bore the news of the birth of Jesus Christ.

The evangelist St. Luke says that at that hour some shepherds were keeping watch, tending their flocks; to whom, according to the opinion of some authors, appeared the angel Gabriel, in company with many other angels, and made known to them that the Saviour of the world was born. St. John Chrysostom says: "He did not go to Jerusalem to carry the tidings to the scribes and Pharisees, still less to King Herod,

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because they were proud, and did not deserve that the Lord should grant them such a favour, but he went to the shepherds who were humble." And although at first they were terrified, the angel immediately reassured them, telling them that the Messiah was born, and if they desired to adore Him, how they might find Him, saying: "You will find the child wrapped in swaddling bands and laid in a manger."

O blessed angel, the news which thou hast brought would rather cause men to lose the Lord than to find Him — the Lord a child, the Lord in swaddling bands, the Lord in a manger! Consider thy words, O holy angel, because all these things denote need and are contrary to the essence and majesty of God. "Believe me," replied the angel, "so it is. The Lord without changing Himself has made a wonderful change, and being eternal is now a little new-born child. He who more than fills the world, and whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, is now wrapped in poor swaddling-clothes. The Lord who has His seat upon the Cherubim now reposes in a manger for animals." O great mystery, O great wonder, O all you who desire to see marvels and wonders never before seen, hasten to see this; let us all go to Bethlehem to behold the new-born Son, and the mother who has brought Him forth, to look upon a marvel so stupendous. But remember not to go with empty hands, because the shepherds carried Him gifts; let us also carry some suitable offerings. He inhabited a humble place, let us bring Him humility; He wept, and let us offer Him tears for having offended Him; let us pray Him to grant us grace, and receive us mercifully, since for this purpose He is born. In particular let us pray Him that among others He will grant us the one supreme thing, which is grace, that we may be meet for His heavenly kingdom.

Nicephorus Callistus writes that the Emperor Justinian commanded that the feast of the nativity of Jesus Christ should be celebrated. Before his time it was observed by some particular churches only, but he having first conferred on the subject with the Roman pontiff, ordered that it should be celebrated universally throughout christendom on the twenty-

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fifth of December, as is done now; on the same day adding some other feasts, as those of St. Stephen, St. John, and the holy Innocents. The Justinian above mentioned reigned in the year of the Lord five hundred and sixty-five.

The feast of the holy Innocents, martyrs, written by the evangelist Saint Matthew; with some reflections by Alfonso Vigliegas.

AFTER the birth of the Son of God in this world, after He had been visited and adored by the Magi on the thirteenth day, after having been presented in the temple on the fortieth day, and St. Joseph with the holy Virgin and the child had returned to Nazareth, the evangelist St. Matthew says that an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said to him: "Arise, and take the young Child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and tarry there till I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." Great care has the Lord of his friends to whom He reveals the remedy before the evil comes.

The omnipotent Lord might have caused Joseph and the Virgin with the Son to remain in safety at Nazareth miraculously, but He does not often work miracles where human care may provide. Joseph did not delay to do as he was commanded. He gave notice to the holy Virgin of the revelation, and without delay they and the Child took their departure and went to Egypt, and there remained concealed until the death of Herod. The old Adam broke God's commandments and fled from Him, but the new Adam, to fulfil the divine command, went to hide Himself and remained hidden as a fugitive for some years in Egypt. And this He did for the consolation of the saints, that they may not wonder, if they are sometimes obliged to fly and to remain concealed and oppressed; let them not think it a strange thing, for they are aliens on the earth. But if they seek to be free in every place, even in Egypt among the barbarians, let them have in their

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company the blessed Child Jesus, as Joseph and Mary had, who remained in safety in Egypt, and were well treated and caressed by this barbarous people, which happened on account of the Child whom they had with them. Sometimes a delinquent flees to the church, and taking a little child in his arms, ascends a tower or a campanile, where they cannot fire at him with an arquebuse, for fear of killing the child, and they give him food to eat, lest the innocent child should die of hunger. So also, when the righteous man sees himself persecuted, whether with or without cause, let him take Jesus Christ, who is a child, in his company while he is in this life, and not wait to take Him in the next, because then he will be great and powerful himself, and will not stand in such need; and also because it is useless to pray God for one who is in hell. Jesus Christ in this life permits Himself to be taken as a little child, and he who has Him in his company may rest secure, though all hell should make war against him, he will be provided with a safeguard, and will have the means to deliver himself from all dangers which may threaten him.

Josephus, in his book on those times, says that Herod had been for some time occupied with some differences, which he had with his own sons, relating to the succession of the kingdom, and he had been obliged to go to Rome to defend his cause before the Emperor Cæsar Augustus; and having finished this law suit, he began another, with the sons of the citizens and inhabitants of the country of Bethlehem.

Herod remembered the coming of the Magi, who were seeking the new King; and if they had told him that He was in a stable on a little straw, perhaps he would have been more indifferent, but they told him they sought the new-born King of the Jews. Herod held this kingdom tyrannically, because it was not his by right of birth, he being a foreigner, notwithstanding that he had professed himself a Jew, and observed their law. He knew that that people expected the Messiah and King who was to set them at liberty and deliver them from all tyranny, which was understood by him to be temporally. When therefore he heard the Magi say this



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King was born, he began to suspect greatly, and sought to know from the doctors of the law where this King was born; and it having been told him that He should be born in Bethlehem, he sent the Magi, ordering them that they should return to Jerusalem and should bring him word where the new King was, that he might go to worship Him. This evil man said this with deceit and treachery, because he sought to have Him put to death. Human malice cannot resist divine wisdom, for he was so blind as not to take the precaution of sending with them a servant of his own, who would certify him of the fact; and so it happened that the Magian kings, warned by God, returned to their own country another way.

Herod, seeing that he was mocked by them, and fearing that he might lose his kingdom, called his captains and men of war and — as Basil the Bishop of Seleucia says, who is quoted by Simeon Metaphrastes — spoke of them thus. "I have often made proof, my friends and servants, of the valour of your hearts in the events which have occurred in my kingdom, which have been many and difficult, in which you have not hesitated to peril your lives for my service. Now a most important occasion has arisen, which if it is not immediately remedied, will cause me to lose my kingdom and you your king, who has always granted you many favours and rewards, and intends to grant you many more. Now your desire to serve me will appear on this occasion; and if you esteem yourselves valiant soldiers, now is the time to make it apparent by deeds, for a great danger threatens my house. Know then that a mine is secretly laid to destroy my kingdom, and myself together, from the earth.

"I am not made war against or assaulted by some open enemy, but a child, not yet two years old, threatens to deprive me of the crown and the sceptre of the kingdom of Israel. He is born and is now in the city of Bethlehem; and of this child have the prophets foretold that He should be King of Israel, that He will place my crown upon His head, and will take the royal sceptre from my hand. I fear the prophets, but Him I have not seen.

"You remember the Magian kings who came from the

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East and announced that this King was born, and that they had come to worship Him and pay Him homage. If those from such far countries fear Him, much more have I cause to fear Him, who am so near. I ordered these kings that, having found Him, they should bring me word, that I might go to see Him, and I should easily be freed from this peril. But they have mocked me, though for what reason I know not, and have returned to their kingdom by another way, without giving me any information.

"I fear, I doubt, I waste away, and destroy myself, thinking of these things. I see no remedy whichever way I turn, except from you. My request then is this: I desire that you should go to Bethlehem, and with drawn swords enter every house in its territory or the neighbouring countries, sparing the old, not harming youths or women, but killing every child from the age of two years to those who are only one day old.

"I warn you to kill them all, not sparing any; for if only one of them should remain alive, know that this one would deprive me of my kingdom. Have no regard to their mothers' tears, but seek my enemy in their very arms. And if any one of them would defend her child, kill her and him together. Fear not that you shall be called to account for this, for I order it done; enter as lions into that city, and seek with all diligence that not one may remain hidden, lest by chance it should be He whom the Magi came to adore."

The captains having understood the desire and need of the king, informed all the army, giving them the same reasons which he had given them. All were well pleased to work so much evil. They proceeded towards Bethlehem, and he was considered the bravest who marched the most rapidly. They entered into the city and the murder commenced. The cruel wolves began to kill the helpless lambs; all the houses were filled with the cries of the afflicted mothers, the streets ran with blood, and the squares were crowded with the dead bodies of the holy innocents.

Herod desired to kill Jesus Christ in the person of each one of them; and He had pity for them in Egypt, where He

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then was, seeing that they died for His sake, though this worked for good to them, and not evil, as all of them received salvation. If these children had not died at this age, and on this occasion, it might have happened that the souls of many of them might have been lost; but Jesus Christ desired that none of those who were born in the same province and time with Himself should perish.

The murders, the blood, the number of the dead increased, the streets were filled with them, but the fury of those cruel and barbarous men did not cease. The most secret chambers of the houses could not conceal these holy infants, nor the temple where God was adored, where it had been the custom to offer prayers but not sacrifices, because they were offered only in the temple at Jerusalem. They now began to offer in the temple at Bethlehem, not sacrifices of animals, but of innocent children; everything was stained with their blood; caves, ditches, and other secret places did not avail to conceal the poor little children, for they were all discovered.

And if by chance some mother had been so careful that the soldiers had not found her child, her lamentations would betray his hiding-place, so that it appeared as if by her tears she summoned the executioner, lest he should be deprived of a death so fortunate and happy. Some mothers of great and courageous souls threw themselves before the soldiers, seeking to receive the stroke of the sword in the place of their children; this availed them nothing, as they would be wounded, and the infants killed. Others held them so strongly that the soldiers could not tear them from their grasp, and would cut them asunder, one half remaining in the mothers' arms, the other in the hands of the soldiers. Some ran distractedly here and there, with their children in their arms, seeking an escape from the scene of the murder, and falling over the dead bodies, their children would be killed by the fall. Others turned to the savage soldiers and said to them: "How is it you can be so cruel? Are there not some among you who have mothers and children? Have you never known the great love one bears for one's children? The cruelty of beasts is less than yours. If some fault has

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been committed in this city, it has assuredly not been done by those whom you kill; rather kill us who deserve death for having borne children to men who are so cruel." The soldiers, hearing these words, were moved to compassion, but calling to mind the command of Herod, they became more savage than before, and killed the infants even at the mothers' breasts.

St. Augustine, who has written upon these events, says in a sermon: "The Lord being born, many lamentations were heard, not in heaven but on earth. The angels rejoiced in heaven, and those who were mothers wept upon earth. Jehovah was born a little child, and therefore little children should be offered to Him. Innocent lambs should be sacrificed to Him who was to be slain as a lamb on the altar of the cross."

The poor mothers tore their hair, beat their breasts, cried with a loud voice, and their eyes became fountains of tears. One would say: "Why would you deprive me of the child to whom I have given birth? Alas! miserable woman that I am, to have brought him up with so many caresses, only to be tortured and killed by you." Another said: "Why kill so many if you seek one only?" A third said: "Ah! come now, Saviour of the world, and appear to these soldiers, which Thou canst do without danger to Thyself, since the choice of life or death is in Thy hands, and thus deliver us from this misery and our innocent children from death."

Gregory Nyssenus says that it was a most pitiful sight to see the wretched mothers of the innocents, when the cruel mandate of Herod arrived in Bethlehem, embracing their children and bathing them with tears, waiting to see them soon bathed in their own blood. Basil, the same bishop of Seleucia quoted before, says that through all the city of Bethlehem nothing that was spoken could be heard, by reason of the great uproar and confusion, while the murder of the innocents lasted; for the infants themselves, with their older brothers and sisters, together with their fathers, lamented bitterly, but beyond all were their mothers' cries and tears. Old men said that never had such a cruel

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deed been done in any place, unless it had been sacked after some long and obstinate war. Every one lamented the day, and the sun which was so slow to give place to the darkness of night, which might stay the fury of these savages.

When they found no more children to kill in the city, the soldiers passed into the neighbouring villages to do the same there that they had done in Bethlehem. And again was the mourning of the disconsolate mothers renewed, in seeking the bodies of their dead children. Some found them cut asunder and laid the pieces together, saying most pitiful words. Some knelt down before their children, saying to them: "Wake up, my son, thou hast slept long enough; awake from the sleep which the hatred of Herod has brought on thee." These and similar words said the mothers of these holy innocents.

When Herod knew that his command had been executed, he gave tokens of great joy; he crowned himself with the crown of victory as if he had triumphed over some enemy. Neither did this wicked man take it to heart that in the massacre of the children one of his own sons was killed, who was at nurse in a place near Bethlehem, and who was therefore murdered without being recognized. Macrobius relates that the Emperor Octavius, hearing of this, said: "In the house of Herod it is better to be his pig than his son;" thus giving it to be understood that Herod being a Jew, the pig would have been safe, as it would not have been eaten, but the child was put to death.

Herod could not have discovered a more effectual way to make known the birth of Christ, for at this time it came to the knowledge of every one that a child was born who had been adored by the Magi, and by whom he feared that his kingdom should be taken from him; but it was not deferred so long, for before Christ was grown up Herod was deprived of his kingdom and his life together, and with them lost also his soul. The manner of his death was that he killed himself by his own hand, by which he had persecuted Jesus Christ. We see by experience that by that with which one offends

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God, one is often punished. Saul sought to kill David with his own hand, and with the same hand he put himself to death. Judas sinned in selling Jesus Christ, and the wretched man hanged himself with his own hands.

Some think that the number of children killed was that mentioned by St. John when he says in the Apocalypse that a hundred and forty-four thousand follow the Lamb; but this is not certain. Indeed it appears impossible that in a place like Bethlehem and its territory there should be so many children of less than two years old. The evangelist St. Matthew says that then was fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah: "Then was heard a voice of weeping and lamentation: Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." Bethlehem is called Rachel, because the beautiful Rachel, who was the wife of the Patriarch Jacob, was buried near the city of Bethlehem.

The holy innocents were the first martyrs who died for Jesus Christ; and He at His coming into the world offered them to His eternal Father as the first-fruits of the garden of the church. He also granted them unusual favour, as they were all saved. Neither did He do any wrong to their fathers and mothers, for though they were deprived of them for His love, He had first given them these children; and it is also to be believed that He gave them others in their place, as it happened to Job, who, being deprived of seven sons and three daughters, when he afterwards returned to his former prosperity, the Lord gave him others. We may be reminded by this event that when the people of Israel went out of Egypt, or, as it may be said, that the Lord departed from that country with His people, and the Egyptians remained lamenting, because in one of the plagues which He sent them, which was the last, all the first-born died, so when Jesus Christ departed from Bethlehem the people of Bethlehem remained lamenting, for it is a certain thing that in every place where God is not, misery and tears abound.

Let us pray His Divine Majesty that He may always dwell with us, that we may be content, and that the content may

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be real, enjoyed on earth by grace, and afterwards in heaven in glory. Amen.

The Catholic church celebrates the feast of the Innocents on the twenty-eighth of December, and their martyrdom was in the time of the Emperor Octavius.

The life of Saint Thomas, martyr, and Archbishop of Canterbury.

ST. THOMAS was born in London, a city of England. His father was called Gilbert, and was one of the principal barons of that kingdom, both by nobility of blood and gifts of fortune. His mother was named Matilda, who, being the daughter of an admiral of the Soldan of Egypt, a great lord in that country, was to be the heiress of all her father's goods, he having no other child.

It chanced that during the crusade to the Holy Land this admiral made Gilbert a prisoner, with many other English and French lords, and took them as slaves into his country. Gilbert being with the other prisoners, this Matilda before mentioned, who was a lady grown, fell in love with him, not without the providence of heaven; and for his love left her father's house, abandoned her country, renounced her religion, relinquished all her riches, became a Christian, and took Gilbert for her husband; who being set at liberty, married her and took her to England, where Thomas was born, who from his early childhood was brought up by his mother in the fear of the Lord, and in great devotion to the holy Virgin Mary.

As he grew older he applied himself to the study of letters in England, and also in Paris and Bologna. His mother died when he was twenty-two years old, and through the entreaties of his father, Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was the primate of that kingdom, took him into his house. And though Thomas was young, as has been said, nevertheless the archbishop, seeing him studious and very learned in the

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laws and of upright life, made him his counsellor, and sought his advice in difficult and important negotiations for the church.

For the same reasons he went several times to Rome to consult and decide questions with the Roman pontiff, always having good success; so that when at the death of King Stephen he was succeeded in the kingdom by his son Henry, although the society of Thomas was very pleasing to the archbishop, and he was important to him in his house, and he had already made him archdeacon in his church, nevertheless, considering that the king was very young and should he have evil counsellors some harm might come to all the kingdom, he succeeded in having Thomas made high chancellor, which is the most honourable office at that court. Thomas so conducted himself in this office that he did nothing that he ought not to have done. He was acceptable to the king and to all the kingdom, and was much loved and esteemed by both, because he was a true and honest man, as indeed he was all his life long. He was affable, courteous, gentle, and very charitable, and though all the affairs of the king and of the kingdom passed through his hands, his door was never shut; he gave audience at all hours and to all people, and conducted all his business with despatch.

In his conduct he was most honest, and the king, holding him to be so, sent him often to a city called Strafford, to visit and provide what was needful for a lady with whom the king had a friendship. He, when he went to see her, lodged in her house. And there was an old man deputed by the king who was her guardian, and he became suspicious of the chancellor because he was young, of graceful manners, and noble presence. The old man fancied that one might pass from the chamber where Thomas slept into that of the lady, and he determined to watch. He entered into the chancellor's chamber through a secret door, with a dark lantern, and saw that his bed had not been occupied, which confirmed him in his suspicions; but passing out into another room, he found Thomas, who had spent the greater part of the night kneeling in prayer till, overcome by weariness and sleep, he had fallen

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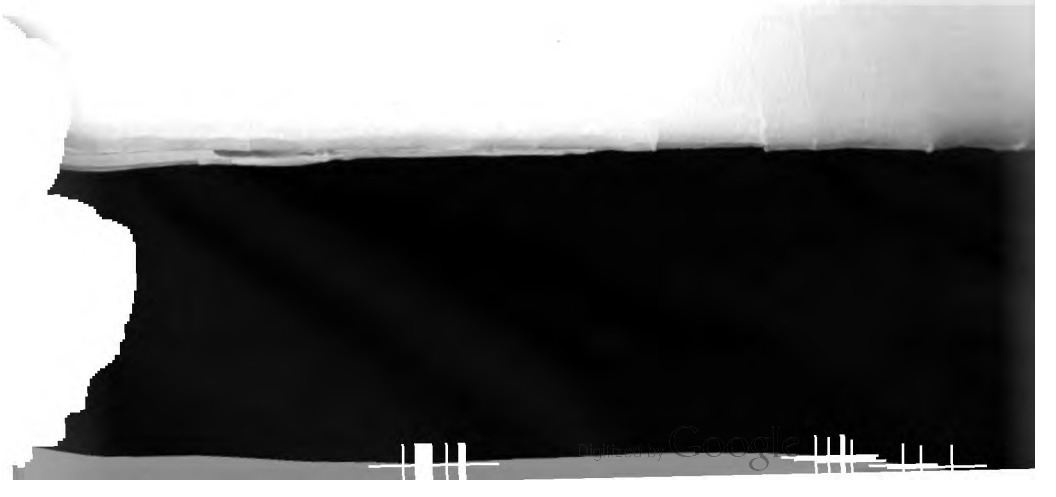
asleep on the floor in a most uncomfortable position. When the old man saw him in this condition, he changed his opinion and decided that he whom he had thought unworthy was a true saint.

Thomas served the king not only in the office of chancellor, which was so wearisome to him that he often said to the archbishop and his other friends with tears that his life had become a burden, and that he sought an occasion to leave that charge with honour; but he served him also in the war which he made in Toulouse and other places against the French. It happened once that he was left alone with the soldiers, whom he conducted at his own expense, and with them he gained a great victory; also with his own hand he unhorsed a Frenchman called Eugerano of Greece, a famous man of arms.

Thus it naturally came to pass that the king loved him more and more every day, and he was much esteemed by all the court, and he always entertained some of them at his table. Even the king went often to eat with him without being invited, and sometimes when he had dined himself he would go to the chancellor's when he was dining; and he took much pleasure in the conversation at his table. For though he was but a young priest, and his guests were secular people and courtiers, still all that was spoken there was discourse fitting for the refectory of a convent.

The king having a son who was also named Henry, and desiring to find a master who might have the care of him, he decided that it should be Thomas his chancellor. So that to all his other occupations this one was added, which was not light, because all the great lords of the court gave him their sons also, that they might be brought up in company with the prince, and might learn wisdom and good habits from him. He laboured in this duty with all his power, and used all diligence, considering that if these youths were well educated all the kingdom in time to come would be peaceful and harmonious.

It happened about this time that the Archbishop of Canterbury died, and the king was in company with the chancellor



when he heard of it, and he said to him that he must be in readiness the next day, because he should send him to Canterbury on some affairs. The next day came and Thomas went to the king in his travelling dress, and he said to him: "The affair you are to conduct in Canterbury is that I desire you should be archbishop of that city." Thomas smiled a little at this, because he was in a dress very different from that which was suitable for an archbishop, and therefore he said to the king: "See, my Lord, what kind of religious man and saint you intend to place in this holy chair? If I have ever done anything pleasing to your Majesty, or by which I may claim any favour, I ask particularly that you will not place this burden upon me." The king replied: "This cannot be, but I desire that you should be archbishop, and have this honour which is the highest in my kingdom, for this appears fitting to me." The saint, hearing the king express this opinion, spoke his mind freely to him in this manner: "My Lord, although I agree that there are in me some qualities which might merit this honour, still I cannot accept it, because I esteem your favour and friendship more than all the honours of the world, and I am convinced, that if I were archbishop, I should lose them, because you might do some things contrary to the ecclesiastical authority, as you have done before, to which I could not consent."

These words of the saint did not succeed in changing the mind of the king, and he spoke with Henry the Cardinal of Pisa, the apostolic legate to his kingdom, and prayed him that he would induce Thomas to accept the archbishopric. The saint resisted long, but at last, knowing it to be the will of God, he accepted it. All the clergy of that church, with the provincial bishops, were convoked, and all unanimously elected Thomas, the nominee of the king, as archbishop.

When he was elected he was about forty-four years old; and he was ordained priest, for until that time he had been a deacon only, and this was on the Sabbath of Pentecost; and the next day he was consecrated archbishop in his church, with the customary ceremonies. At this consecration fifteen bishops were present, and all the princes and great lords of

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the kingdom. A petition was sent to the Roman pontiff, who was then Alexander the Third, that according to custom he would confirm his election and grant him the use of the pallio. The pontiff, when he heard who was elected, granted it with words of great favour, and the archbishop received it with great devotion, barefoot, and prostrated on the earth, on account of the great mystery which it contains.

Thomas having received this office, appeared to become another man. He made more prayers, was more watchful, practised more abstinence, and preached to the people to the great satisfaction of them all. In his outer dress he appeared a priest; removing that, he appeared a friar; and under that he wore the dress of a hermit, which was a rough haircloth next his flesh. He said mass every day, and afterwards served thirteen poor men whom he lodged in his house, giving them their food himself, sometimes washing their feet, and when he did so, giving to each one of them four pieces of silver. This was his daily habit, and he had already done it by the time that others woke in the morning; and it pleased him to do it at this early hour, to escape the notice of the people and to have the rest of the day to attend to other affairs. Three times a day he had a table spread for the poor, for more than a hundred at once; and two priests were charged to provide for them, that nothing should be wanting and that they should be well served. He begged them with much earnestness to pray God for him and for his church. He had in his palace a monastery of holy men, the superior of which was elected by the Archbishop of Canterbury. And though the former archbishops had not had much familiarity with them, Thomas did the contrary; for he not only wore their habit under his priest's robes, as has been said, but he associated with them, said the office, and did other holy works, and visited and consoled the sick. And with all these occupations he attended to all the affairs of his archbishopric and of his chancellorship, for it was his habit to labour continually.

He had also some hours reserved for his studies, and he often preached to the people to the great profit of his hearers.

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He had care that all his servants were studious and virtuous, so that all the conversation in his house was of learning and piety. At whatever hour one entered his apartments, one heard discussions on questions of theology; if one entered the storerooms or the kitchens, one heard discourses on philosophy; and if by chance one entered the stables to see the horses of the archbishop, there were heard the fables of the poets, and other things interesting to students. His charity towards the needy was unbounded, for no one ever went to him with either temporal or spiritual wants who did not go away consoled; for if it was possible to grant what was asked, he did so willingly, and when he could not, he gave a gracious answer, and promises which were afterwards fulfilled. At his table he had daily many guests, and it was always spread with costly dishes; but he himself dined upon one alone.

A monk once dined with him in whose monastery the usual food was cooked beans, and he, seeing that at the archbishop's table there were many dishes, and that the archbishop himself ate a bird, he began to smile, and to turn it into ridicule that the prelate should be held to be a saint, not thinking he could be so good, because he kept a plentiful table. The saint perceived this, and said to him in a somewhat loud voice: "Truly, my brother, it may be that you are more greedy eating your beans than I eating this bird. I eat that which my health requires, and that I do temperately, often laying aside a part of it; but you eat more than your health requires, and though your food is coarse, you take more pleasure in it than I in mine. I think you may remember to have read that Adam was driven from paradise, not for having eaten pheasants and partridges, but because he ate a fruit of the forbidden tree, which might have been an apple or a fig or some such thing; know, then, it is not by what we eat, but by disregarding the precepts of God and his church that we sin in eating." With this reasoning he silenced this proud man, who because he ate beans thought he had secured heaven, and that who ate differently did not deserve it; and he took it in bad part that St. Thomas should eat a bird, which he

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did because he was accustomed to such food, and if he changed it, it might have proved hurtful to him.

It happened that many secular people had become masters of some property belonging to his church, either through the negligence of his predecessors, or because they feared these people who were rich and powerful; but Thomas held such a course that everything was restored to the church. In consequence many of these people complained of him to the king; but he, who always held Thomas in high esteem, made particular enquiries, and finding that Thomas was right in doing as he had done, he dismissed him in peace and drove those who had complained of him from his presence with many threats, which caused them to work all the evil possible against the archbishop, so that they let no opportunity escape of giving the king a bad opinion of him, always blaming everything he did.

This holy archbishop went to a council which was held in the city of Tours in France, on account of a schism in the church of God; at which Pope Alexander assisted, who received the archbishop with much love and good-will, as did also all the cardinals and other prelates. When St. Thomas entered the city, the pope was left with two cardinals only, because all the others had gone to meet him and to see this man so famous in all the world. The council being over, he returned to his church and took with him many indulgences and favours granted him by the high pontiff. He made diligent enquiries respecting the life and holy conversation of King Edward, and ordered that his body should be disinterred and placed among the bodies of the saints, and that in his church and through all his diocese he should be held as a saint. This was the ancient custom which lasted some time, that a bishop having used suitable diligence, might declare any one a saint in his diocese; but this is now done only by the Roman pontiff.

There had continued a great friendship between the king and the archbishop, of which the devil being envious, and the Lord so permitting, there began to arise some coolness between them. The immediate cause was that two priests

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had committed two crimes. One was a canon named Philip of Lidrois, and he had ill-treated some ministers of royal justice. The other was a priest who was accused of having killed a man. There were many rumours against them both, among the populace, all saying that the priests felt confident they should not be punished with death, and in consequence they had dared to be very insolent and to commit many crimes.

The holy archbishop judged it well, in order to quiet this tumult, that these two priests should be severely punished. He who was accused of having committed murder, though the evidence was insufficient to convict him, was suspended from his offices and benefices, and shut up in a monastery for the rest of his life. The canon who was convicted of the other crime was beaten and suspended from his office for some years.

But this was not enough to quiet the people, and they laid their complaints before the king. He, desirous of peace, convoked the diet or parliament of all the lords of his kingdom, ecclesiastical as well as secular, and instigated by some who were envious of the archbishop, demanded that all priests who were guilty of crimes should be given into his hands, that they might be punished by the secular power. The holy prelate alleged against this demand, but in the most conciliatory manner, the ancient canons and constitutions of the high pontiffs of councils and emperors, in all of which it was declared that the priest should be punished by his prelate, and that in atrocious cases, where the punishment of death was deserved, he should be given over to the secular power, which was the executioner and instrument only to put him to death, he having been first degraded from his office. He said also that this was the usage of the church of God from the time of the apostles, and that being the same church now as then, it was just and reasonable that the same ordinances should be observed. The king contradicted the arguments of the archbishop and said that he ought to judge them, and that it belonged to him to make laws, and that he required that all should obey them. The holy prelate replied that

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he had always obeyed all laws in which there had been nothing contrary to the holy canons and to ecclesiastical liberty. The king was much incensed by this answer and left without saluting the archbishop, seeing that all were of his opinion; and the next day he left before daybreak and went to London.

Great confusion followed among the people, and also among the priests themselves; for seeing the king so angry, some of them began to give way and yield all that he had demanded; others followed him to London, and some secular lords exerted themselves to bring the priests to the king's way of thinking. Some assailed them with offerings, others with threats, and there were few who remained steadfast, the greater part of them promising to obey the king in all that it should please him to command. The holy archbishop stood alone; for though some thought with him, they wanted courage to declare themselves. He expressed himself boldly, saying that he would sooner suffer a thousand deaths than consent to anything prejudicial to the liberty of the church. The mediators before mentioned did their best to persuade St. Thomas to yield to the will of the king, saying that he desired only the usage and custom of that kingdom, and that he did so for the preservation of peace, and that he must seek to avoid giving occasion to scandal and inconvenience, or that the prelates with all the church would be ruined.

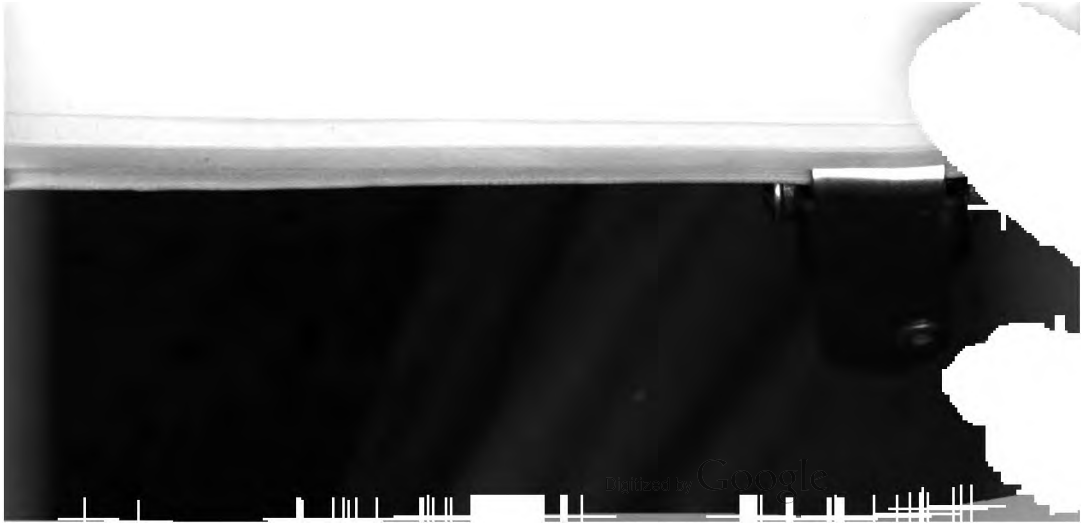
The saint requested to see in writing what the king demanded, to see if it might be possible for him to accede to it. This was immediately made known to the king, who ordered that his demands should be written down. Thus arose a great evil, because those to whom the king gave this order were enemies of the archbishop, and sought to make discord between him and the king, and therefore inserted some things which they were sure the archbishop could not accede to, because they were greatly prejudicial and injurious to his dignity, as well as to that of the high pontiff, as they required that the interdicts imposed by either the archbishop or the pope should be neither accepted nor observed, and that who-

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ever should publish them in the kingdom should be imprisoned; that no priest or friar could leave England or return there, even though he were an Englishman, without the written permit of the king; that no one should appeal to the archbishop or to the pope; that the alms which were collected in the kingdom for the church of St. Peter in Rome should be consigned to the king, and that he should dispense it according to his will; and that the king or his agents should judge the causes of priests and should punish them as they deserved. These were some of the king's demands, with others of the same kind; his false counsellors having assured him that formerly they had been observed in the kingdom, and that it was desirable for the public peace they should still be maintained.

The above conditions were carried to the archbishop, who having read them, although he had at first shown himself conciliatory, in order that the peace of the kingdom might be preserved, seeing how unjust and pernicious they were, declared himself opposed to these conditions, and to the king, saying that he could not comply with them, as they were unjust and contrary to ecclesiastical liberty. The king, having heard the decision of the archbishop, and not knowing the malice of his counsellors, whom he supposed to be acting honourably, decided to pursue the affair with rigour, and threatened the archbishop, if he did not yield to his demands of the right of arresting and punishing priests. The good archbishop resisted as much as was possible, defending his priests, and when he heard that some of them had been arrested, he published an interdict and took some other precautions. The king was counselled to cite him to appear in public audience to answer to some accusations.

This citation was presented; and the saint replied with much constancy that a father could not be judged by his children, and that it was unheard of in the kingdom that an archbishop of Canterbury should be brought to trial before the king; but if he were accused of any error, his accusers might bring the affair to the pope, before whom he was ready to go to defend himself. Notwithstanding this answer,


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as they daily took some steps or commenced some suit against him, he resolved to appear at court. He first said mass, and dressed in his sacred robes, except the pallio and the pianeta, and with his cross borne before him, according to custom, went to the palace. And as the guard detained the people who accompanied him, he took the cross in his own hand and entered in this manner, though many opposed it, saying it was not fitting, and that he would provoke the king to greater anger rather than to clemency by entering his presence armed against him with the cross; but notwithstanding, he entered where the king was, who seeing him thus, rose in anger and left the room.

The archbishop remained with the other archbishops who were present, who laboured to induce him to accept the royal conditions because he had at one time manifested a willingness to do so. But he, steadfast in his constancy, answered that if he had been ready to accept any ordinance of the king, it had been with the understood condition that it should not be contrary to ecclesiastical liberty, as these were which had been laid before him, and that he was ready to lay down his life rather than to accept them. After this, other accusations were made, and severe threats, and an edict was published in which it was commanded that no one should have any dealings with the archbishop, and that whoever should disobey this edict should be held guilty of treason. And all this was done to compel the saint to yield to the demands of the king.

But as none of these things succeeded, it was deliberated in the apartment where the king was, whether the archbishop should be imprisoned or be put immediately to death; of which the saint being advised, he left the palace to avoid being the occasion of such a sacrilege in that place. The gates of the palace were closed, but there were some who secretly favoured him, and a door was opened for him through which he passed. The audacity was wanting to shut him up in his church, and the same night, with some who desired to follow him, he left the city secretly. Having departed by flight, and suffered many hardships on the journey, he

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reached a port of the island, and embarking on board a ship, passed to Flanders.

The king, having heard that the archbishop had fled, sought for him in every direction; and not finding him, sent ambassadors to Pope Alexander, who made in his name great complaints of the archbishop. The pope gave the ambassadors audience in a public consistory, and replied to them that when he had heard the archbishop, he could decide the case justly. The ambassadors, having received this reply, returned ill content to the king, who, hearing the pope's resolution, became more angry and furious than can be imagined and confiscated all the property of the archbishop and his family, of whom there were many in the kingdom, sparing neither sex nor age, and even ordered that they should be exiled in want and beggary, desiring that such as had been of good condition should go to seek the archbishop and complain to him that he had been the cause of their ruin.

The archbishop, in consequence, went to Rome, and before he had audience the pope and cardinals were angry with him, thinking him guilty of those things of which the ambassadors had accused him; but he, having given a good account of himself, and shown the conditions which the king desired he should swear to obey, no sooner were they read in the public consistory than the pope and all present became indignant against the king. The pope spoke somewhat bitterly against the archbishop, saying that he had shown too much timidity in listening to things so vile and pernicious, which he ought to have opposed with more boldness and determination, using his authority in excommunications and interdicts against all those who should favour them. When Thomas related all he had done in the affair, and in how much danger he was placed, the pope and all his court were moved to much compassion towards him.

The holy prelate said, moreover, that all this persecution had happened to him for having accepted a dignity of which he was unworthy, which he had done to please the king, who almost forced him to accept it; wherefore he prayed

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His Holiness that he would dismiss him from his office and appoint another in his place, that the king and the kingdom might have peace. There were not wanting some of the court who advised him to do what the saint requested for the sake of the peace and quiet of the whole kingdom, but others said that if he deprived Thomas of his dignity, who had filled so valiantly the office of a good prelate, it would give occasion to other prelates to become abject in similar cases, and to do things contrary to God and their consciences, and to make no resistance to tyrants who should persecute the church. The pope, having considered the force of these arguments, confirmed him in his post and commanded that he should continue to hold it until he should decide otherwise. In the meantime he told him to choose some monastery where he should like to stay, and that he would cause the king's favour to be restored to him.

The holy archbishop chose the monastery of Pontigny of the Cistercian order, and requested the pope's permission to adopt the habit, which granted, the saint remained for some time in this monastery, where many of his relatives who had been banished and dispersed assembled, and complained to him as had been expected. These things afflicted the holy archbishop keenly, and he was in great sorrow of heart, but he laid everything before God. It pleased His Divine Majesty that wherever these poor exiles abode, the cause of their banishment being known, they were welcomed and caressed with much courtesy, because the holiness of Thomas was known throughout the world; and it happened that many of them, by reason of the great kindness which was extended to them, became richer in foreign countries than they had been formerly in their own.

The king had information that St. Thomas was in that monastery, and sent in consequence to threaten the monks that if they harboured him there he would banish all the friars of their order from his kingdom. The holy archbishop, that those monks should not suffer any wrong on his account, left the monastery and went to the court of Louis King of France, who received him with much piety and good-will,

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entertaining him well. Ambassadors were sent from the King of England to King Louis praying him not to keep in his court this his enemy, from whom, on account of his unworthiness, he had taken the dignity of the archbishopric.

The Christian king replied in this manner: "Say to your king that I am a king like himself, and that I should not dare to deprive the poorest priest of all my kingdom of his office, and that I do not know how he can feel safe in offending the whole Catholic church by depriving a man as holy as Thomas of his dignity, which is the highest in the kingdom." The ambassadors returned to England with this reply, and the pope and the King of France afterwards agreed together to reconcile the archbishop and the king, whom the pope threatened with the heaviest censure if he did not yield, which he finally agreed to do.

He freed the archbishop from sentence of banishment, with all his relatives, and others who had been banished on his account. The archbishop went to present himself to the king, who was at one of his palaces in the country, and as he showed himself affable and benevolent towards him, the holy prelate asked permission to seek redress by law against certain bishops his suffragans, who at the time of his banishment, and to his prejudice, had taken an oath of allegiance to Prince Henry as heir apparent, which they ought not to have done, being under metropolitan jurisdiction; and the king granted all his requests. The saint returned to his diocese, and at the entrance of the city of Canterbury, he was met by all the people with manifest signs of thankfulness and satisfaction.

Not many days after, he summoned the above-mentioned prelates and commanded them to make satisfaction for the error they had committed, as he himself had warned and commanded them not to do this act against his dignity and jurisdiction, and they had disobeyed his injunctions. On this account these prelates sought new occasion to persecute the archbishop, and having gained to their side many of the principal men of the kingdom, both ecclesiastical and secular, they went to the king and told him that the archbishop

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desired to deprive him of his kingdom, and that he had returned from banishment no more humble, but rather prouder than before. And though he went with a small retinue, whenever he left his house the whole city followed him; and that nothing was now wanting to create him king, except to assume the crown and say "I am king."

These and other like things were told to Henry of the holy archbishop, which were utterly false, as the people who followed him did so only because he was reputed a saint, and they desired his blessing and to kiss his robes. But the king, becoming more angry than at the first, said: "What a state of things is this, that I cannot help myself or have peace with a priest in my kingdom? Cursed be all those who eat my bread, for none of them will avenge me of this man."

These words of King Henry's being heard by some of his household, they thought to gain favour of the king by killing the archbishop. For this purpose four men, as wretched as malignant, banded themselves together, whose names were Reginald, Hugo, William, and Richard. These resolved to pass into England, the king being then on the continent, and kill the archbishop wherever they should find him; and going to the city of Canterbury, they sought him and questioned him respecting the wrong done to the king.

The holy prelate answered all their accusations, excusing himself where he appeared to be in fault, and showing himself not afraid of them, saying he despised their threats and bravado, for he held himself ready to die for the honour of God and the liberty of his church. They then asked him why he had persecuted the prelates his suffragans, who had been to complain of him to the king. The saint replied that he had asked permission of the king himself to proceed against them by law, and he had granted it, because they had interfered against his jurisdiction contrary to all right. The soldiers then began to complain and say that this was speaking against the honour of the king, and to call him a traitor, because, they said, he persecuted those whom the king favoured with his protection.

At this a great tumult arose, and the people of the arch-

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bishop's house, and some friars who were there by chance when these things happened, assembling themselves, the four conspirators went away and summoned some persons whom they had in readiness for this occasion; and with loud shouts that they were acting in the king's service, they came to the church with arms in their hands, but found the doors had been closed by the priests and friars to defend their prelate. He rose from his chair, saying: "The church of God ought not to be defended like a fortress besieged by enemies. I am ready to die for the honour of God and the liberty of my church." Then, turning to the soldiers, he said: "I command you on the part of God to kill none of my people, for if there is any error it is mine alone and not theirs, and they should not bear the punishment, but I alone."

Having said this, he kneeled down and made a prayer recommending his church and himself to God; and one of the assassins, who thought he should gain much reward for so doing, struck a blow at the side of his head; but a priest named Edward raised his arm to defend his prelate and was severely wounded. The sword afterwards struck the head of the holy martyr, and he received a wound from which the blood began to flow. He, without stooping, or moving his body, his arms, or his hands, remained still and absorbed in prayer, and awaited other blows.

He who had first struck him began to cry out: "Strike, strike! Kill, kill!" and immediately many blows were struck at the saint by the others, and he fell near the altar where he was kneeling. After this the ruffians left the church, boasting and saying that he who sought to make himself king now enjoyed the reward of his rashness and folly.

They then entered and sacked the apartments of the holy priest, leaving nothing but two haircloth shirts; but fearing that the populace would assemble to revenge the death of their beloved prelate, or that they should be assaulted by the priests, who had collected on seeing those wounded who sought to take possession of the body of St. Thomas, they all took flight, some here and some there.

It was afterwards known by certain information that in

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the course of three years they all died, some of them in the wars in the Holy Land, doing penance for the sin they had committed. One of them, he who first struck the pontiff, died in Sicily, tearing his own flesh to pieces; and the wretched man, being at the point of death, confessed that he and the others who had combined to commit this sacrilege always trembled and were like those subject to fits and delirium while their lives lasted; and all acknowledged that God had thus punished them for the sin which they had committed.

After these sacrilegious murderers had fled, the people, having heard what had happened, hastened to the church, and the priests and the friars placed the holy body on a bier. All crowded to look at him, and many shed tears for his death; others wiped the blood spilled on the ground with napkins and handkerchiefs, which they preserved with much reverence and devotion.

Night being come the priests undressed the holy body and found it clothed in haircloth from the head to the feet, which caused many tears in those who were present, who said one to another: "He sought no earthly kingdom who governed his body so severely." He was clothed in his pontifical robes, and buried in a tomb near the altar of St. John the Baptist, and of a St. Augustine who had been bishop of that city. The saint was fifty-three years old at the time of his martyrdom, which was in the year of our salvation one thousand one hundred and seventy-one, on the twenty-ninth day of December, in the time of Frederic the First, Emperor of Germany.

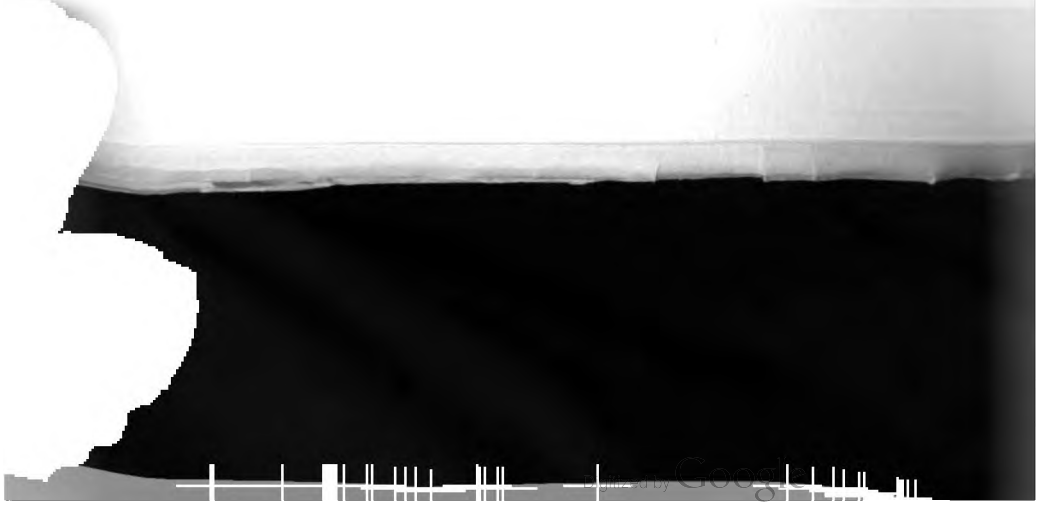
When Pope Alexander heard of his death and of the manner of it, after having, with his court, shown much grief, and having received careful information respecting his life and miracles, he canonized him, placing him in the list of holy martyrs, and commanded that throughout the universal church his festival should be celebrated on the day of his martyrdom.

King Henry showed much grief at his death and sent ambassadors to explain the manner of it to the pope, who

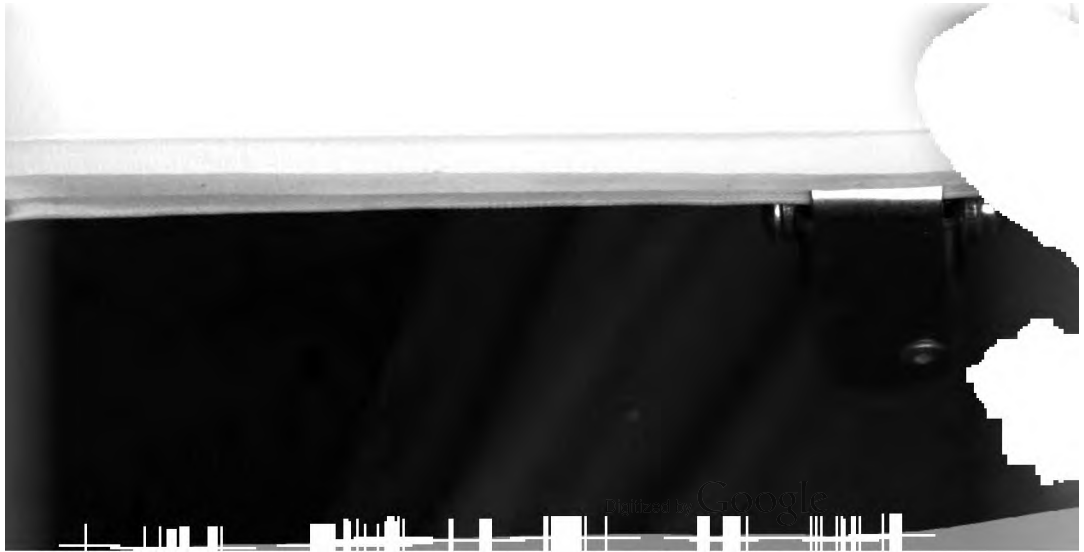
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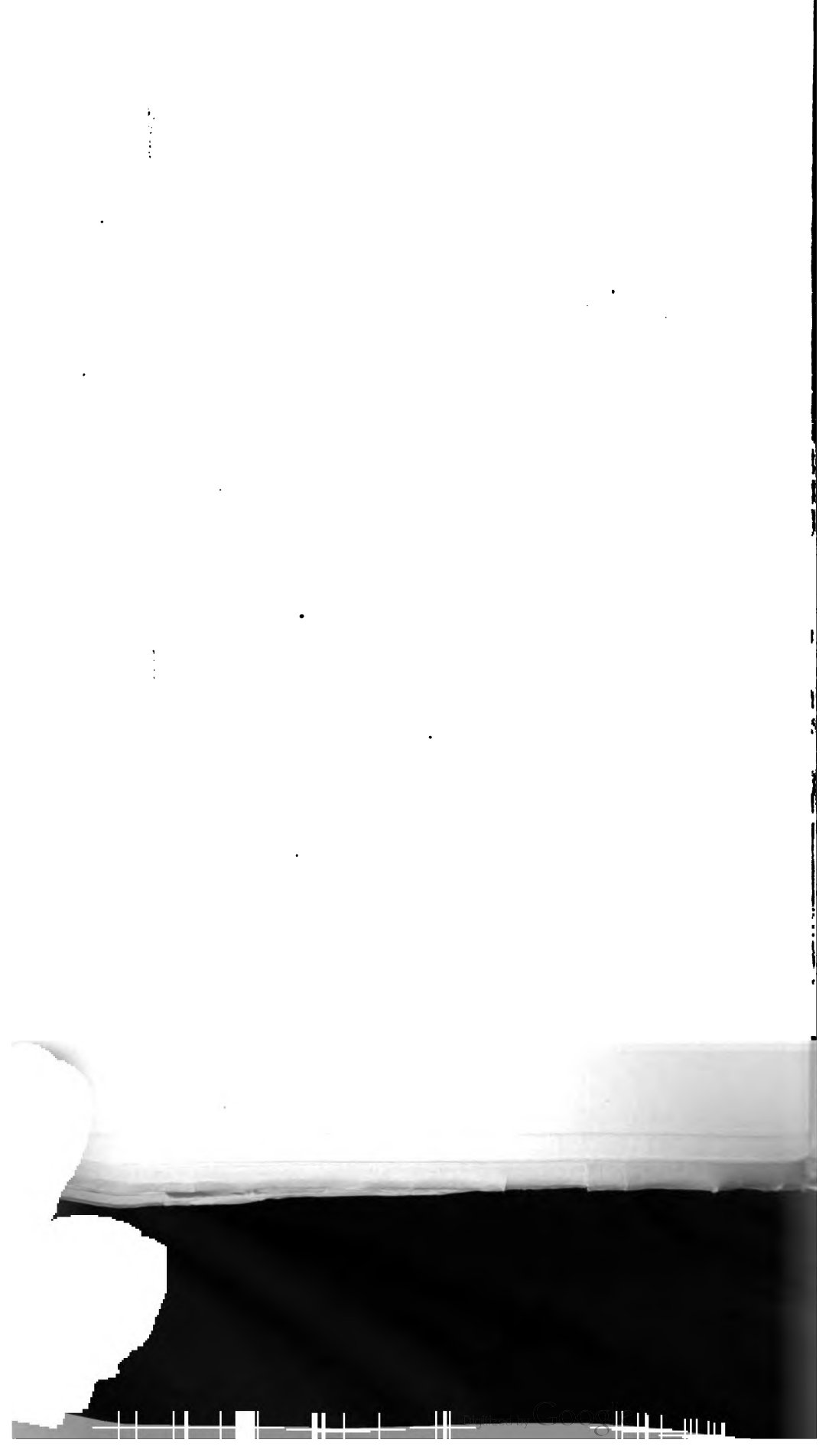
bore himself towards him as was just. For though the king did not openly command the death of St. Thomas, still the words which he spoke were the cause of it, and he therefore accepted the penance imposed on him by the high pontiff, and he afterwards visited the tomb of the saint with the greatest humility and devotion.

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CONCLUSION





OF THE UNIVERSAL JUDGMENT

In which are recounted the sayings of the prophets who have treated of this day, writing the history of it as it shall be, all collected from the scriptures. Written by Alfonso Vigliegas.

THE authors who have written the lives of the saints, after they have written the life of the Saviour, commonly write the history of the universal judgment, in conformity with that which may be found written of it in the divine words. And since the motives which induce them thus to do are many and just, it appears well to me to do the same; and I do so, first pre-supposing the reason why the Catholic church, and also all the holy doctors, usually make mention of this terrible and fearful day, which is this.

The Hebrews were already almost at the door of entrance into the land of promise, after having been pilgrims in the desert for the space of forty years, when God commanded Moses, their guide and captain, to make them a discourse, as may be read in Deuteronomy. In this he recalled to their memory the favours and benefits which God had done them; how they were brought out from bondage in Egypt, delivered from the hand of Pharaoh, and led through the midst of the Red Sea, in which He caused Pharaoh and all his hosts to be drowned; how He had given them food to eat, without their labour, for the space of forty years, during which time their clothes waxed not old, neither did their shoes wax old upon their feet; how He had given them victory over many enemies, who came against them in the way to impede their journey, that they should not pass to the land of promise, into which they were about to enter, and take possession and repose themselves therein.

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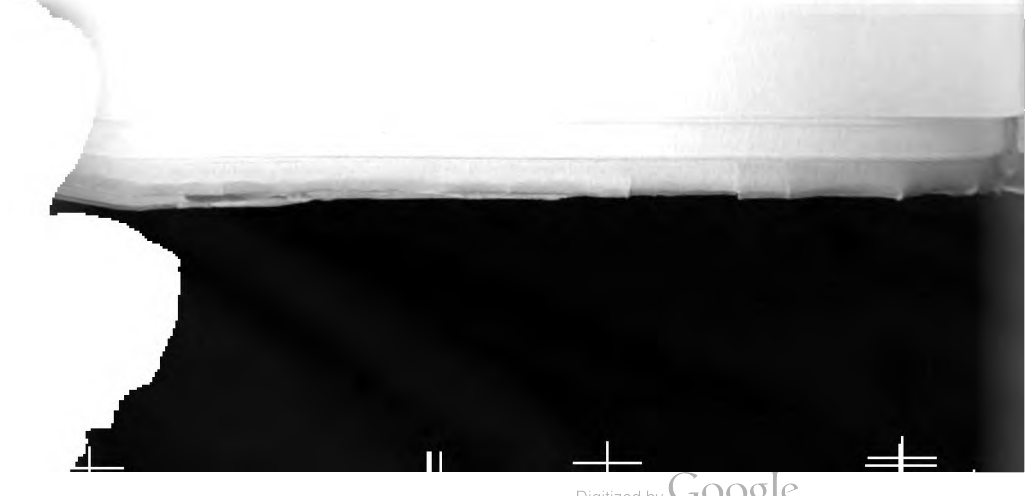
For all these favours, said Moses, God desired nothing of them, except that they should love Him, and serve Him, and keep His holy commandments. "But if you do not so," he added, "I give you this warning only, that you offend a great and powerful and very terrible God, who has no respect of persons, nor regard to rewards, but will judge the cause of the orphan and the widow."

Moses, by these words, endeavoured to inspire the people with fear, and induce them to serve God and not offend against Him, and therefore he said to them: "Remember diligently that you have to do with a great and powerful God. He is not like the gods of the Gentiles, who have no power and can do nothing. Our God has all power and can do all things. I tell you also that when He is angry, He is very terrible, and divides a hair in two, and punishes with eternal punishment, and in his punishments has no regard to persons or rewards.

"He will be the judge of the living and of the dead; He will hold a universal judgment where all ever born shall be congregated, great and small, rich and poor, when He will be the defender of the orphan, the widow, and the poor of this world, and will punish those who injure and outrage them.

"But if He punishes with rigour those who have injured the despised of this world, how will He punish those who shall have been ungrateful towards Him, who have had no love to Him as a father, or reverence to Him as a master, and have not held Him as God? Without doubt the punishment of such will be terrible; neither will riches, nobility, nor aught else avail. He is no respecter of persons, and therefore to be feared of all men."

By these words it may be seen that Moses recalled to the memory of the Hebrews the universal judgment, to cause them to fear God and not offend Him, but to serve Him with love. For this same cause the Catholic church and its doctors, guided and governed by the Holy Spirit, often treat of the universal judgment, that we may have fear, and that this fear may be to us as a bridle, that we may not turn aside and offend God. Truly it is a thing to awaken great



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fear to consider what all those say who have spoken of that day.

Isaiah says: "The day of the Lord will come, and will be cruel, full of wrath, of anger, and of fury." Not only Isaiah, but many other prophets, call the day of judgment the Lord's. For though all days are the Lord's, this especially is all His.

A contadino enters by chance into the house of some great lord; and entering the hall, he sees many chairs around, placed to accommodate any who desire to seat themselves, and in the midst of these one turned towards the wall, with its back in sight, contrary to all the others. Wondering at this, he asks the cause and learns that this chair is for the master of the house. The contadino, more confused than before, asks once more: "Whose then are these other chairs that stand around?" He is told that they all belong to the lord of the mansion, but that which is turned to the wall is more especially his, because in the others any one may seat himself, but that no one occupies this except himself.

In the same manner, though all days are the Lord's, still the day of judgment is called more particularly His, because on other days men do their will, but on that day God will do His will alone. God now bears patiently with the proud, endures the covetous, appears not to see the dishonest, and so with all other vices; but on that day the fashion of things will be changed. Also, as His patience has been great, so much the greater then will be His anger. This David says in one of his psalms: "Thou givest wisdom to those who fear Thee, that they may escape the fury of Thy bow."

The prophet calls the day of judgment a bow, because as a bow causes fear before it wounds, so the day of judgment is a terror to many even now. The bow when it is charged is changed from its ordinary condition, and thus Christ, who is by nature gentle and compassionate, on that day will appear to change, showing Himself most rigorous. The more a bow is charged and bent, the greater is its effect and the deeper the wound; so on the day of judg-

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ment, the longer God has endured the offences of sinners against Him, so much the greater will be their wound and punishment.

This God also reveals by the mouth of his prophet Isaiah: "I have long time holden my peace; I have been still and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman." But the unhappy condemned will feel the pains, as the same prophet says in another place: "And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth."

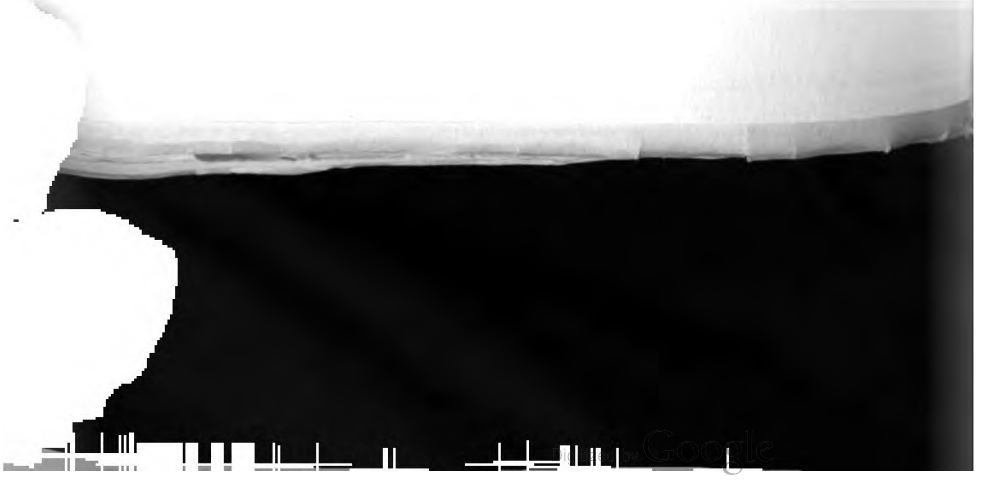
The pains which the condemned will suffer are compared to the pains of a woman that travaileth, but they will without doubt exceed these for three reasons.

The first of these is the fire which will burn both soul and body, and in comparison with which the material fire which we use is but painted fire. Thus also says Isaiah: "They shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames."

Another reason of the suffering of the condemned will be the contempt and shame they will endure in seeing all their secret sins revealed, as Isaiah also says: "Their shame and sin shall be uncovered, and shall be seen of all the world." There have been those who to escape a little shame in this world have put a rope around their necks and hanged themselves; others have plunged a sword in their own hearts.

But how great will be the shame which the miserable will suffer on that day! It will be such and so much that they will desire the mountains to fall upon them and cover them; as the same prophet also says: "They will hide in dens and caves of the earth, flying from the face of the Lord."

The third reason why the sufferings of the lost will be extreme will be the affliction which will embitter their souls in seeing they might easily have escaped this punishment and enjoyed all that they will see the blessed enjoy. Neither does Isaiah omit to declare this also. "Behold, my servants shall eat, but you shall fast; they shall have joy, but you confusion; they shall enjoy everlasting gladness, and you



shall howl and envy for the sorrows that shall come upon you." For these three reasons the torments of the condemned will be great and rigorous, and fearful will the day of judgment be.

Jeremiah the prophet speaks thus of the day of judgment, speaking in the name of God: "I will be witness and judge, nothing can be hid from me, and that which my eyes behold, on that day I will judge, and I will punish the guilty." Words and works, nothing will be concealed from me. Ezekiel also says: "Think not the day is far off when the wicked shall be destroyed, for it shall shortly come."

Daniel also says that there will be a last judgment, not like the judgments of this world, which pass and finish at all events with death, but those who shall then be condemned to death will remain forever dying in hell. At that day the books of conscience will be opened, all the deceits of evil men will be uncovered, and they will be obliged to render a strict account of all things done in the body and all will be punished. Joel likewise says: "The day of darkness is at hand." Nahum the prophet says: "On that day I will take a candle in my hand, to see the sins of men, and none of them shall be hidden from me." David says thus in a psalm: "God will rain upon the wicked snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup."

This will not be all their suffering, for no one is able to describe it. Solomon, in Ecclesiasticus, says: "Fire, hail, famine, scorpions and serpents, arrows and death, will be the portion of the wicked." The patient Job had a clear vision of the rigour of that day, and therefore he said: "Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer; but I would make supplication to my judge. O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret, until thy wrath be past."

If one so holy as Job so much feared that day that he prayed to remain in the grave until it was past, that he might not behold it, think what will be the misery of the sinner who has spent all the days of his life in offending God. If when

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Jesus Christ was but a little child in the manger, trembling with cold, He yet made King Herod tremble with fear; and if when He was in agony in the garden, sweating as it were great drops of blood, the agony having passed, He caused a great band of armed men to fall to the ground by only saying to them: "I am Jesus of Nazareth," what then will their portion be when He shall come roaring as a fierce lion, and shall pronounce sentence against miserable sinners?

I have now recounted some of the things which the ancient Fathers said of the day of judgment, both patriarchs and prophets. Let us now see what Jesus Christ Himself says. St. Matthew relates that He says that He will come in majesty surrounded by many angels. St. Luke says that many signs shall precede his coming, such as wars, famines, and pestilences.

These shall also come before Antichrist, of whom St. Paul speaks; and also Daniel, as the doctors declare, says that his preaching shall last three years and a half. He will announce himself as the Messiah, who is still expected by the Jews, and they will immediately receive him as such. He will show his power in different parts of the world, beginning at Babylon, where he will be born of Hebrew parents of the tribe of Dan, as is written by the grave and ancient doctor Almone, who gives this reason: that the evangelist John records in the Apocalypse twelve thousand signed from every tribe of Israel, except the tribe of Dan, which he does not name; which he says that he omitted as unworthy of eternal memory because Antichrist is to be born of that tribe. After this God will wait a short time, that the Jews may be converted to our faith, as David says in the psalms: "They shall be converted at evening time"—that is, at the end of the world—and may repent, both they and all those who shall have followed Antichrist.

Then will be seen other signs as the judgment draws nearer, such as the sun will be obscured, and the moon will give no light, the stars will be darkened, and appear to fall from heaven. The sea will make a terrible roaring. Men will be astonished and terrified, looking at each other and wasting



away for fear of those things which they shall see and hear. Then the hour of judgment being come, the Son of God will descend from heaven accompanied by His angels, with the banner of the cross before Him, and with all the mysteries of His Passion. Before the Lord shall arrive near the earth, and the place where it shall please Him to remain, a globe or flame of fire, as St. Peter the apostle says, shall descend, and all the world shall be burnt up.

Then shall sound that terrible trumpet which St. Jerome heard always in his ears, and the Lord will say: "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment." Heaven and hell will obey this voice, and from all parts will come the souls and unite themselves again with their bodies. Those who descend from heaven will resume their bodies with infinite gladness, as something long desired; for having been partakers together of their labours and sufferings, it is a just thing they should share in the same reward; and these holy souls, entering into their own bodies, shall have these four gifts or graces of beatified bodies, — namely, brightness, swiftness or agility, subtility, and impassibility. The souls of the lost, on the contrary, will experience mortal pains in rejoining their bodies. Here will be assembled together the good and the bad, all at the place of judgment, which will be the valley of Jehoshaphat, and here they will come from all parts of the earth.

From this it may be conjectured that the trumpet will not be sounded at the same hour for all; for though here, in the place of judgment, it will be morning, in another place at the same time it will be evening, and in another midnight. Then will descend the angels, who will divide the good from the bad, as the sheep are divided from the goats, as Jesus Christ has said.

This will be an afflicting and miserable spectacle, to see parent separated from child, the wife from her husband, brother from brother, friend from friend, some to enjoy the glory of God, others to suffer in torments. The father will say to his son: "Ah, my child, why do you desert me? Why do you not aid me in this hour of need?" The husband will

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say to his wife: "Alas! my dear wife, why do you go, and not take me with you? Is this the love I might expect from you?"

One will recommend himself to his brother, and another will call upon his friend. Being in this manner divided from each other, the good will be on the right hand in the air, and the wicked on the left hand on the earth, and the Judge between them in the sight of all; so that the wicked will behold only the humanity of Christ, which for them will be so severe and terrible that in beholding it they will feel mortal anguish. Near Jesus Christ will stand the apostles as counsellors and assistants at the judgment, who will confirm and approve the sentence which Christ will pronounce. Nearer to Him will be the Holy Virgin His mother, and on the other hand the great Baptist. Then will be opened the books of conscience, which will be before each one, and in them will be recorded all those things which each has ever done. Here will be seen all good and evil works, and the deeds of each will be open to all the universe. And also the sins of the just will be made manifest; but they will not make them ashamed, because at the same time will their repentance be made known. The wicked, on the contrary, will feel such shame and confusion that they will cry and entreat the mountains to fall on them and cover them, to hide them from such ignominy and reproach.

Thus the deed of all having been manifested, the Judge will pronounce sentence.

First He will turn to the good, for in this also Jesus Christ will show Himself more inclined to reward than to punish, and He will say these kind and loving words. "Come,"— oh sweet words, said in time of utmost need — "ye blessed of my Father."

O Lord, what dost Thou call them to do? Thou callest them perhaps to repentance, to tears, to fasts, to discipline, and to suffer martyrdom for Thy love? Alas! they are not called to these, the time for these things is already past.

"I call them," says the Lord, "to possess the kingdom, that they may be crowned kings and enjoy the blessing which

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my Father has prepared for them before the foundations of the world."

The gladness of the just will be so great when they shall hear these words from Jesus Christ, and He shall tell them, moreover, that He gives them the kingdom of heaven for good works done to His poor, for feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, and other works of charity, that they will ask when they did works by which they could merit such a reward. Jesus Christ will answer them saying: "Inasmuch as ye have done these things to the poor for my sake, ye have done them unto me."

Then will He turn with a terrible countenance towards the wicked, and with a voice full of anger will say to them: "Depart!" Oh, what a terrible word! "Now, O Lord, that the time is come to divide the prey taken in battle, Thou sendest these away, but where, Lord, dost Thou send them?" The Judge replies: "I send the cursed to everlasting fire." "What company, O Lord, wilt Thou give them in the place of such a punishment?" The Lord replies: "Devils, serpents, basilisks, and dragons, for such as these was hell prepared; but since they have led the lives of dragons, basilisks, and serpents, since they have chosen to imitate devils in sinning, and would not repent or be merciful to the poor and sorrowful, therefore with devils must they go."

At hearing these words the wicked will be in terror and dismay, and will say: "Lord, when have we been cruel and without compassion towards Thee?" The Lord will reply, that when they were cruel to the poor who asked charity for His sake, they were so even to Him. He will grant them no more time to speak, but having said these words, the fire which will first have burned up the world will be collected together from all parts, and the earth will open, and with men and devils together, will be hurled like a globe of lead into the depths of the abyss, where they shall remain while God shall be God.

The world being delivered from this perverse generation, the just and the saints who remain will embrace each other

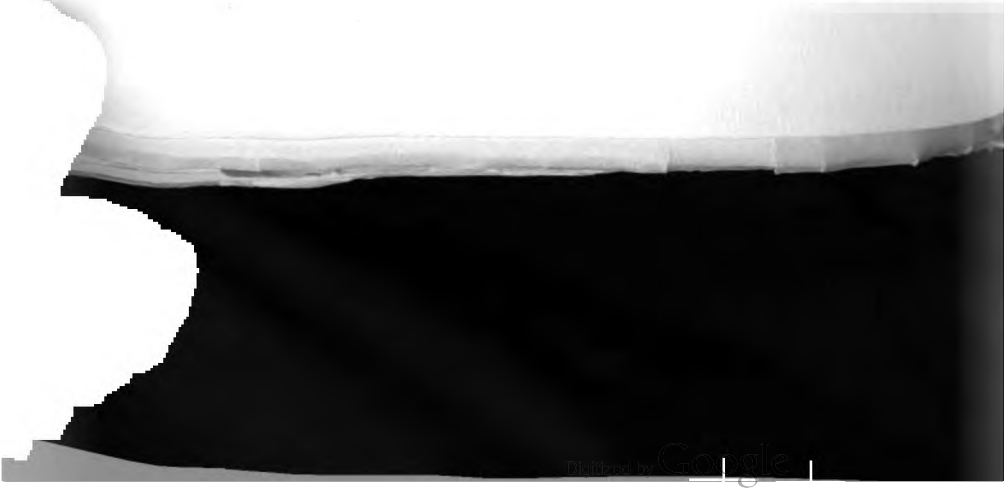
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with more joy than thought can conceive; and parent with parent, and friend with friend congratulating each other, all will proceed together to Jesus Christ, to render Him due thanks.

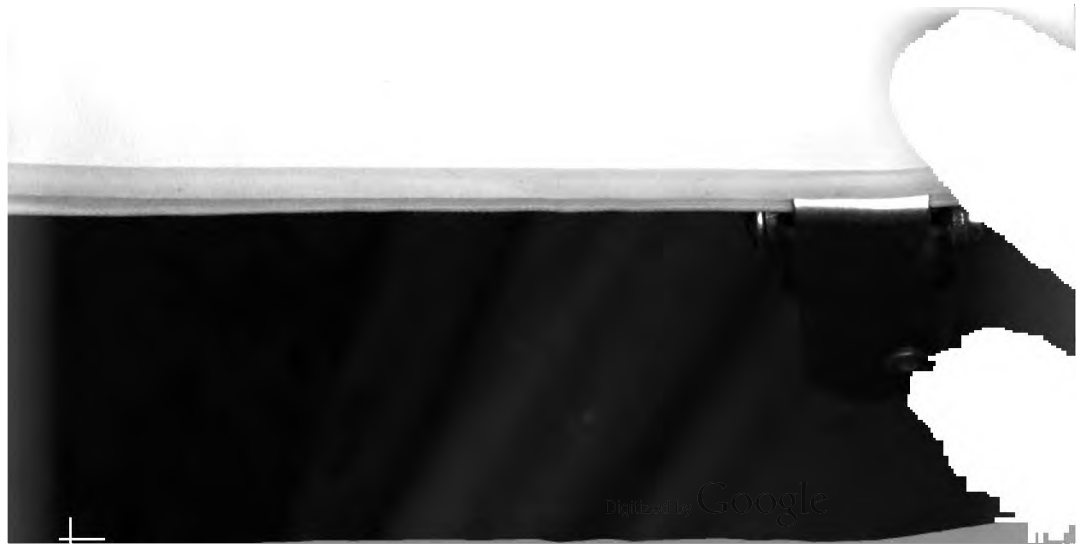
Then will be ordered a procession of greatest majesty, at the head of which will go Jesus Christ, with the banner of the cross before, having around Him a great multitude of angels, singing and rejoicing. Near the Lord will be the holy Virgin His mother, then will follow the apostles, having St. Peter as their head. On the other side will be the patriarchs and prophets, who will have for their head St. John the Baptist, who was without a head once, but now he will have one most beautiful.

After these will follow the squadrons of martyrs, the captain of whom will be St. Stephen, who was stoned; and the marks of the stones will appear pearls and rubies set in gold. These squadrons will be beautiful to see, in various fashions and liveries which they will wear, which will be the signs of the different martyrdoms they suffered. Then will come the confessors, who will have St. Sylvester at their head, and after them the virgins, with St. Catherine as their leader. There will be the kings — David will be their captain; and the husbands, who will have St. Joseph as their head. The monks and nuns will follow, some before and some behind, according as they shall have been more or less perfect; St. Benedict with his monks, St. Domenico and St. Francis with their frati; St. Clara with her nuns, and St. Catherine of Siena with her holy women.

Finally, all in procession will ascend through the region of the air; heaven will open, and Jesus Christ will enter in triumph, with all that blessed company. Conducting them to the Eternal Father, He will say these gracious words: "I offer Thee, O Eternal Father, the fruits of my Passion. These are my dear friends, and I pray Thee to receive them with love and honour, as they well merit." The Eternal Father having embraced His Son with much tenderness, and being in the midst of them, the Holy Spirit will accept the gift, and all three Divine Persons will appoint them their


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mansions, giving to each one the place and degree of glory which their works shall have merited; where they shall remain eternally, in joy and gladness forever and ever enjoying the glory and blessedness, of which may God make us worthy by His mercy. Amen.


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